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other valuable objects in the Christian life, if we expatiate for a few moments upon the ineffable and inestimable preciousness of that blood, as it presents itself under several separate, essential, and enhancing considerations.

Suffer me, however, to remind you that our approach to this subject should be reverential, tranquil, and deliberate; it is a subject for much thought and much fear. Let us pray that the Holy Spirit may fill our minds with this truth; that he will prepare our hearts to receive the moral and practical directions it suggests, and that he may enable us to form a proper estimate of the preciousness and value of the atoning blood, as the foundation of all our present holiness and happiness, and of all our future hopes.

I. LET US ENDEAVOR TO ESTIMATE IT IN ITS ADAPTATION TO ALL THE WANTS OF MAN, AND ITS ANSWERABLENESS TO ALL THE PROPERTIES OF GOD.

We must admit it to be important, to be necessary, and to have precisely the relation which it should bear to our interests and hopes. The alternative to the atonement would not have been God's dishonor, but it would have been man's ruin. The redemption of the soul is precious; and therefore the redemption of Christ must be so. Man of himself has wronged, and would wrong God by his rebellion; he is a rebel against him; and if ever that rebel was to be forgiven, if ever Jehovah, — if I may so say, and I think I speak upon the authority and with the warrant of the Scripture, — if ever Jehovah was to be justified in forgiving him, it could but be by means of an atonement, adequate, appropriate, and acceptable.

Let us propose to ourselves the *necessity* of this sacrifice; and of course the foundation of the value of the sacrificial blood must be more particularly considered and ascertained. We will endeavor, then, in the manner of the great apostle of the Gentiles, to reason out of the Scriptures upon this point, not independently of their principles and tenor, but to reason out of them, by openly alleging, demonstrating, and explaining that Christ must needs suffer.

He who made man has an indisputable right to govern him. Of course he does so in conformity with his own nature, which is infinitely holy, just, and good. He has an essential, unalterable right in him, to uphold his government over him, and to compel his creatures to submit to him. Of course the principles of his government will be embodied in a well-understood law, which will be in its turn the basis of his practical administration. We learn from Scripture that this law was, in its origin, essentially a spiritual law; and as the natural effect of a

cause, what his law was, that his government would be also. To this law was attached the condition of eternal life; that is to say, by the most scrupulous obedience to it man was to be confirmed for ever in the life which he then had, with the addition of all that was capable of increasing and enhancing his enjoyments in it; while the penalty of breaking it was the forfeiture of all his hopes of immortality and never-ending joy, which must of necessity take in the idea of personal suffering, in order to vindicate the perfect proportion existing between the promised recompense of obedience, and the threatened penalty of transgression; for the loss of immortality alone would be no proportionate or correspondent penalty to his disobedience.

Mark the three immutable and indisputable principles in this law! It was the express condition of the divine engagement. It was the basis and support of the divine government. It was intended as a manifestation and expression of the divine perfection.

Plainly, then, by the veracity of God, to take the lowest view of the subject, by his credit as the Creator and Governor of the world, swaying the affections of an intelligent and upright creature; and by the glory of his unchanging nature, he was concerned in the enforcement of that law, by all these he was pledged to the conferment of eternal life, — for it is important to consider that man was then rather in an elementary than in a confirmed state of things, — by all these considerations or principles he was pledged to the conferment of eternal life on such as continued obedient to the end of their trial: and to the adjudication of its opposite, *eternal death*, with whatever it implies, whether of personal and bodily suffering, or of the simple loss of immortality and joy, to those who transgressed it. Equally unrighteousness is impossible with God, either to punish the innocent, or to premit the punishment of the offender. No! the sad fact is, that with every thing in favor of his obedience, his capacities, his circumstances, his motives, the powerful bias of his divine destination, his noble and attractive hopes, with every thing, in fact, in favor of his obedience, *man transgressed*.

Is God then unrighteous that taketh vengeance? God forbid. There is every thing in God, there is every thing in what belongs to, and is associated with the idea of him, that forbids, precludes, repels, such a thought. The truth of his word, the rectitude of his administration, the holiness of his nature — which implies universal righteousness, — all this not only justified, to speak in the manner of man himself, to whom the assumption has reference, but rendered it absolutely needful that he should withhold the remission of the life that was forfeited; or, what comes to the same thing, of the death which was due.





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English













THE  
ENGLISH PULPIT;  
COLLECTION OF SERMONS

BY THE  
MOST EMINENT LIVING DIVINES  
OF  
ENGLAND.

"I wish the majesty of the pulpit were more looked to; and that no sermons were offered from thence, but such as should make the hearers both the better and wiser; the more knowing, and the more serious."—*Bishop Burnet.*

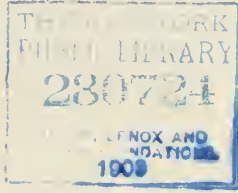
"I love a serious preacher, who speaks for my sake, and not for his own; who seeks my salvation, and not his own vain-glory. He best deserves to be heard who uses speech only to clothe his thoughts, and his thoughts only to promote truth and virtue."

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CHARLES H. PEIRCE,  
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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE fact that the public are already in possession of many valuable collections of sermons, cannot be deemed a sufficient reason for not increasing the number of such publications. On the contrary, new accessions to the existing stock are constantly needed to supply the places of those that are yearly passing into disuse. There is a freshness in a work directly from the press — especially if it contain a choice *variety* of matter — which gives to it a peculiar charm. Perhaps

“’Tis *curiosity*. — Who hath not felt  
Its spirit, and before its altar knelt?”—

that will lead many to read with interest a new book, who would never advance beyond the title page of an old one of equal merit.

That this inert love of novelty may be turned to the best account, no pains should be spared to furnish an ample supply of healthy aliment, that thus the reluctant mind may be allured to the reception of useful instruction. Besides, it is a fact — scarcely less interesting to the patriot than to the Christian — that the alarming demand for a large class of publications, pregnant with the most deadly poison, under which the press for years has “groaned, being burdened,” is gradually diminishing, while good, truthful, and religious books are finding a correspondingly greater sale. To answer this increasing demand, and as an antidote to the poison, every Christian press in the land should be kept busy, scattering its “healing leaves” with an unsparing hand, until useful and religious books, like Aaron’s rod, shall have swallowed up the serpents of the magicians.

In offering to the public this collection of sermons, it is proper to state that, with the exception of a single discourse,\* no portion of the present volume has before been published in this country. It will be found to contain sermons by several ministers whose productions are comparatively little known to the American public. Among these might be mentioned that of Daniel Moore, the worthy successor of Melvill, at Camden Chapel. Mr. Moore is justly celebrated both as a preacher and a writer. In the

\* The sermon by Dr. Burns was preached and published in another form during his recent visit to this country.

latter sphere he has been the successful competitor for several prizes. His writings are destined to be more extensively known in this country. The sermon by him in this volume is one of a series which he delivered before the University of Cambridge.

It is believed that the "English Pulpit" is in no respect inferior to any similar work that has appeared from the American press, while it differs from all of them in two particulars — it contains but one sermon by the same individual, and is designed to embody specimens of the pulpit efforts of some of the most eminent *living* divines of England. In making these selections, the editor has not confined himself to any one branch of the Christian church, but has freely ranged through all denominations maintaining the essential principles of Christianity. And he indulges the hope, that from this wide field he has culled such fruit as will prove both pleasant to the eye and good for food — fruit tending to increase knowledge and promote piety.

The editor would not of course be willing to be held responsible for every sentiment maintained in these pages; still, it has been his endeavor not to give greater publicity to fundamental error. By glancing at the table of contents it will be seen that a choice variety of subjects are here discussed, and by referring to the sermons the attentive reader will discover something of that "diversity of gifts" in the Christian ministry, which, from their respective peculiarities of style, compass of thought, habits of illustration, and natural temperament, is calculated to render their ministrations adapted to "the edifying of the whole body of Christ," and for bringing sinners "to a knowledge of the truth." It has been well observed by the Rev. John Newton that, "in the variety of gifts conferred on the faithful ministers of the gospel, the Lord has a gracious regard to the different tastes and dispositions, as well as to the wants of his people; and by their combined effects the complete system of his truth is illustrated, and the good of his church promoted with the highest advantage; while his ministers, like officers assigned to different stations in an army, have not only the good of the whole in view, but each one his particular post to maintain."

It has been often remarked of the ministers of Great Britain, that a very large proportion of their sermons are addressed to the church, and that the great dividing line between saints and sinners is not made sufficiently distinct. In its general application this remark is doubtless just,\* but

\* Since writing the above, the editor has for the first time met with the following statement by the Rev. John Young, of London. After having preached at Albion Chapel nearly twelve years, in commencing a series of sermons to the unconverted, he says: "It is an unusual thing to preach to the unconverted. I have never yet preached an entire sermon to the unconverted. There may be detached passages in many sermons that are applicable to this class; there may be particular warnings, exhortations, and appeals that are addressed to them; but it is unusual to preach wholly and expressly to the unconverted as a class. It is not the present system." He admits, however, that "this is not in harmony with apostolic example," but that "all the sermons — sketches of sermons rather — that are presented in the New Testament, were preached to the unconverted."



there are many honorable exceptions to it. As an example, might be mentioned James Parsons, of York, "a burning and a shining light," and one of the brightest ornaments of the English pulpit. A large proportion of his sermons are addressed to the impenitent; and seldom does he preach a discourse which does not contain pungent and soul-stirring appeals to the consciences of sinners; and, as the result of his faithful labors, "much people has been added to the Lord." The "Sermons to the Unconverted, by B. W. Noel," show that he does not forget his obligations to this class of his hearers. To this list might be added the names of Bunting, James, Aitken and others. There is undoubtedly danger, lest, from the delightful and elevating nature of heavenly themes, we should be induced to preach more frequently to saints, than is consistent with a faithful discharge of our duty to those who are far from God. It is important to mature and perfect the work of grace in the hearts of those that have embraced Christ; but the great majority of most congregations are in the broad way to perdition; and the minister who is anxious to give "full proof of his ministry," and whose grand, conspicuous aim is, "to save himself and them that hear him," will be careful to "give to every one his portion in due season."

It was observed by the prince of philosophers, "that no man would ever become a good philosopher until he saw all nature in the bosom of the Creator;" with equal truth it may be said, in reference to the work of the ministry, that no man will ever be a good and "faithful minister of Christ," who does not view his responsibility in the light of another world. He must feel that he is an ambassador of God, commissioned by him to "preach the word; to be instant in season and out of season; to reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." Such a minister will strive to obtain deep and realizing views of the worth of the immortal soul — of the imminent danger of its being lost, and of the awful responsibility, should one perish through his neglect. Penetrated with these views, he will feel no inclination to cater to the taste of those "which say to the seers, see not; and to the prophets, speak unto us smooth things;"\* but he will adopt as his motto:

"Careless, myself a dying man,  
Of dying men's esteem;  
Happy, my God, if thou approve,  
Though all the world condemn."

But, if the preacher's heart is not deeply imbued with the spirit of his calling, he is very liable to be unduly influenced in the choice of his subjects, and in his style of preaching, by that class of hearers who regard sermons only as a species of entertainment, or intellectual treat. There are many qualified, it may be, to perceive, and ready to admire the

\* Isaiah xxx. 10.

beauties of fine composition, who are exquisitely alive to the powerful charm of eloquence, that would feel no interest in, nay, be disgusted with, a discourse embodying the most important truths, if presented in a serious and simple style, without the graces of literary elegance and the attractions of oratory. But the preacher of the gospel should never forget that it is quite possible to minister to the gratification of cultivated taste without promoting the growth of piety — that the wondering multitude may be thrilled and electrified by his eloquence, without being alarmed by the warnings, or interested in the doctrines of the gospel. He may be “unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; they may hear his words but do them not.”\* They are pleased with the preacher, and at ease with themselves. But so far as these are concerned, the important and solemn office of preaching has failed to secure its appropriate effect.

Happy the preacher who, when called to “finish his course, and the ministry which he has received of the Lord Jesus,” can address those with whom he has labored, in the language of the apostle, “Now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.” †

\* Ezek. xxxiii. 32.

† Acts. xx. 25—27.

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# THE ENGLISH PULPIT.

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## SERMON I.

THE NATURE AND UNREASONABLENESS OF UNBELIEF.

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BY REV. J. BUNTING, D. D.

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“And he marvelled because of their unbelief.”—MARK VI. 6.

WHEN He, by whom the world was made, condescended to dwell among men, and so was “in the world,” the world “knew him not.” “He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” They “hid as it were their faces from him; he was despised, and they esteemed him not.” And by none of our Lord’s countrymen was that saying more fully verified, than by the Nazarenes. In Nazareth he appeared as an infant; at Nazareth he was brought up; they had the honor of seeing the first indications of his superior wisdom and piety. It was at Nazareth that “the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was with him.” To Nazareth he returned, after his celebrated conversation with the doctors in the temple; and there he was subject to Mary, his real mother, and to Joseph, his reputed father; while he “increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man.” It was at Nazareth that he wrought in the occupation of a carpenter, till the time came for his commencing his public ministry. It was at Nazareth, in fine, that he did many of his most wonderful works. His brethren,—that is, his kinsmen,—all lived there; and this, together with other circumstances, would naturally beget in our Savior some particular attachment to a place with which he had been so long connected: it would be his wish, that the companions of his early life should be made partakers of the benefits of his religion. Accordingly we find, that at the commencement of his ministry he went to Nazareth; and entered into the synagogue, “as his custom was.”—I wish parents to notice this, for their encouragement to train their children to early habits of piety;—as his custom was or had been, “on the sabbath-day he stood up to read;” and

there he delivered a discourse founded on a passage in Isaiah. At the first part of his discourse his countrymen were delighted, and “wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.” But when he began to make a proper application of his subject, as it became him to do, their anger was greatly roused; and but for an interference of his miraculous power, his life had paid the forfeit of his fidelity. They “rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he,” perhaps rendering himself invisible, or them powerless, “passing through the midst of them, went his way.” So ungrateful a reception might well have discouraged him, or induced him to abandon them for ever, as persons who judged themselves, passed sentence on themselves, as unworthy of eternal life. But our Savior, rich in mercy, and slow to anger, has here taught us to be “patient in tribulation,” and to persevere in doing good, though in doing it we suffer only ill. Mark tells us, and we have reason to believe, from comparing other circumstances, that it was only a few months after, that “he came to his own country, and when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue.” As on the former occasion, the people were at first struck with admiration, and confessed that “mighty works were wrought by his hands.” But, notwithstanding their conviction of the truth of his teaching, and the dignity of his public ministry, their minds were filled with prejudice; their evil heart of unbelief was not subdued; and they were not prepared to render him that practical homage which was due to the true Messiah. To justify themselves in their infidelity, they pretended to doubt the truth of his mission; and they basely and ungenerously recounted the meanness and obscurity of his parentage, and the deficiency of his education: — “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.” The *cause* of this was, that their hearts were full of blindness and prejudice, their minds were worldly and carnal, and their reasonings were false and deceitful. And the *effects* of this were deplorable; for it is said that “he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief.” — The sin of unbelief is here represented in a two-fold point of view.

1. *As injurious to those who exercise it.* “He could there do no mighty work.” They did not believe in his power, and therefore they came not to him for cure; and he could not obtrude his goodness upon them, or force them to receive benefits from him, consistently with his



plan and determination. "How much," says the excellent Dr. Doddridge, "did these Nazarenes lose, by their obstinate prejudices against Jesus! How many diseased bodies might have been cured, how many lost souls might have been recovered and saved, had they given him a better reception!" And you will, no doubt, join in the pious wish which the Doctor adds: "May divine grace deliver us from that *unbelief*, which does, as it were, disarm Christ himself, and render him a savor of death, rather than of life, to our souls!" But unbelief is here represented,

2. *As exceedingly unreasonable and absurd.* "He marvelled because of their unbelief;" — it excited the surprise of Christ. Unbelief is altogether without reason; it is not to be vindicated. It is contrary to the duty of the situation and circumstances under which men are placed; it is contrary to what might reasonably be expected from such men under such circumstances. It is to this last view of unbelief that we propose now to attend. We shall, *first*, explain what we mean by unbelief; and, *secondly*, justify the sentiment of surprise which existed in the mind of Christ on the occasion before us.

#### I. LET US EXPLAIN WHAT WE MEAN BY UNBELIEF.

Unbelief, in general, is the rejection of God's revealed truth; and, in particular, it implies the refusal and neglect to receive and act on the testimony God has given of his Son, as the only and all-sufficient Savior of guilty men.

1. *The unbelief of some is TOTAL.* This implies a *rejection* of the Messiah — a denial of his Messiahship — a total refusal to admit of his being the way to life and blessedness. Such were the Sadducees — such were many of the ancient Jews — and such are evidently the majority of them to this day. Nor does it apply to Jews alone: the same word which tells us that the doctrine of Christ was "a stumbling-block to the Jews," tells us that, by the wise and philosophic Greeks, it was despised as "foolishness." All men in the present day have not even nominal faith in Christ. I speak not now of the thousands of heathens who are not believers in Christ; *their* case, whatever it may be, is not unbelief in the gospel; — "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And, how shall they hear without a preacher?" — their case is rather matter of our compassion than of our surprise. But it *is* matter of surprise that, in a Christian country, many to whom the gospel is preached, many who have heard the joyful sound of salvation, — that many of these should despise the majesty of the gospel, and refuse to give it that credence which it demands from them.

2. Not only are they unbelievers who reject, but *such as mutilate and corrupt Christianity*. There are many who profess to admire, and even to defend with zeal and learning, its exterior form and structure, who are yet among the very foremost to deprive it of all its beauty, and to rob it of its peculiar excellency. Amongst these, I cannot but include those who, while they admit the Messiahship of Christ, deny his divinity, his atonement, and his dwelling in the hearts of believers by his Holy Spirit. These are such distinguishing points in Christian truth, that he who systematically denies them cannot, with propriety, be called a believer in Christ. He admits the general words of Scripture, but he puts his own sense upon these words, — a sense very different from that which was put upon them by the primitive church — a sense very different from that which was plainly taught by Christ himself, and by his apostles. He builds the fabric of his hopes on a different foundation from that which God has laid in Zion, namely, on Christ, who “gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor,” and by whose blood alone we can be cleansed from sin; and he regards as so enthusiastic the idea of the indwelling of Christ in the hearts of his people by his Holy Spirit, that there is no room in his creed for the dominion of Christ as King in Zion. Thus, though he believes the *words* of Scripture, he believes them not in their true sense: and as he is not a believer, he is, of course, an unbeliever. This statement is no violation of true *candor*, for that requires attention to be paid to truth; and that candor which does not render due homage to the truth, is *sin*. However common and fashionable this spurious candor may be among men, it is an abomination to God, whose truth it, in fact, denies. For those who believe not, we are required to feel the tenderest pity; for them we are to use our best efforts, to offer up our most fervent prayers. Perhaps the passage which will best explain our duty in this respect, is found in the epistle to Timothy; — “The servant of the Lord must not strive: but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.” Now, this passage, so far from warranting indifference to the truth, represents the truth as a matter of the greatest importance; the very end of our instructions is here stated to be that such persons may be brought to *repentance and acknowledging of the truth*; and it is only as they repent and acknowledge the truth, which they before denied, that they can be recovered out of the snare of the devil, and brought to true repentance. That

is a false love, a fictitious tenderness, which represents error as not dangerous ; and which declares that it matters not what we believe, though God declares that he that believeth not the gospel, — the pure unutilated gospel, — shall be damned. Let us not hide the truth, which we are called by God as a church to exhibit. It is not for the support of light and unimportant truths that the church is called “ the pillar and ground of the truth : ” — no : the truth is of importance ; it is essential to salvation ; and men should see in our whole manner that we consider the truth as nothing less than a matter of life and death.

3. *The neglecters of the gospel*, as well as its rejecters and corrupters, are guilty of unbelief, though in a more mitigated form, I grant. These hold the truth, but they hold it in unrighteousness ; like a man who holds a torch, only to convince those who behold him that the person who bears it is going sadly out of the way. Our Lord condemns all such ; and it is evident they deserve condemnation, because no salutary effects are produced by their profession of faith. Such persons are unbelievers, and it is necessary that the truth should be told them. Faith works by love : the faith of God’s elect is not a mere opinion ; it implies a belief of the excellency, the suitableness, the efficacy of the gospel ; such a conviction of this as will lead men to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ as the chief subject, the substance of the gospel ; such a conviction as leads to the use of Christ for the ends for which God has given him, namely, for “ wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.”

Now, if such persons are not believers at all, how awfully prevalent is the sin of unbelief ! Among those who call our Savior Lord, and who, generally speaking, receive his truth, how many are there who do not believe with the heart unto righteousness ! They have no clear view of their need of Christ as a Savior ; no decided reliance upon him ; no clear application of his merits and atonement. They hear and read of Christ ; they join in hymns to his praise ; they approach him with their lips ; — but there is no affectionate trust of the heart. These, then, are unbelievers : God the Judge will not admit that this faith is saving ; it is dead faith, and cannot save them.

4. *Even in those who are partly renewed by grace*, there are the secret workings of this principle. Though it is in a form more mild, it is yet to be discovered ; and, in proportion as it exists, it mars the progress of the work of grace in their souls. I may instance a case or two.

There is *the penitent sinner*, who is seeking, but has not yet found, the pardon of his sins. In such persons there is to be perceived some good thing toward the God of Israel ; and much that, if followed up,



will lead to good. They are not far from the kingdom of God: they have some knowledge, and some faith. Now, to such, God's word holds out the most gracious promises; — "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." And yet, in many cases, from week to week, from month to month, from year to year, the effect of all these kind promises and gracious invitations is baffled by a secret something, which refuses to be comforted when God would comfort; which puts away the mercy which God waits to bestow; which still exclaims, "The mercy of the Lord is clean gone for ever! he will be merciful to others, but not to me!" Now, what is this secret something, which keeps the man who is convinced of sin, and who wishes for pardon, and who knows that without it he shall be ruined for ever?—what is it, I say, which keeps him out of the possession of pardoning mercy?—what is it? Satan calls it *humility* and diffidence; and he keeps you out of the blessing, by telling you it is not proper for one so sinful and so worthless to lay hold on the blessings of salvation, and that you are only acting the part of a humble man to keep aloof from those blessings. This Satan tells you: but he is a liar, and the father of lies. O listen not to that arch fiend, when he pretends to preach humility! No: the real name of the principle that keeps you back is *pride*, and not humility. Real humility will not lead to unbelief; it will rather lead men to cry for mercy, and cause them to flee to the only refuge that is set before them.

And even those who believe, but are *not yet made perfect in love*, are under the influence of unbelief in part. As unbelief prevents the sinner from entering into God's family; so unbelief, in one who is a child, prevents him from the enjoyment of the privileges of God's family. Take an example. — There are found, in the word of God, "exceeding great and precious promises;" promises of a clean heart, and a right spirit; promises of complete recovery to the image of God; promises of being sanctified wholly, body, soul, and spirit; promises of being preserved blameless to the coming of the day of the Lord. And what hinders the man, who sees the beauty and excellency of holiness, and beholds it so clearly and abundantly promised — what hinders him from entering on the full possession of it? In some cases it may be want of perception of its beauty, and the possibility of attaining it; but, in general, it is want of faith.

Take another case. In some dark and cloudy day a man has yielded to temptation; he has committed sin, and he is filled with misery. But this, his guilt, he acknowledges; he does not attempt to palliate it; and it is the privilege of such a man to come to God as at first he

came, and to obtain a renewal of that favor which he has forfeited. And what is it that induces him to postpone the application for this mercy to a future period? What prevents him approaching the fountain opened? What prompts him to seek to *wear* his stain away, instead of coming to have it *washed* away at once? Satan persuades him that the principle which thus keeps him from God his Father, who is waiting to be gracious to him, and receive him back to his favor, is *shame*, holy shame, ingenuous shame; — but it is really unbelief. We ought to be ashamed of having been negligent, of having been unfaithful, of having been sinners; but we ought not to be ashamed of coming to God for forgiveness; we ought to remember that these words belong to us — “These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And *if any man sin*, we have an advocate with the Father, JESUS CHRIST the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins.”

And I might observe, that unbelief operates, in a degree, *in believers in Christ*. It is so in cases of affliction, of trial, of difficulty. Believers are sometimes in circumstances in which they are ready to say, “My way is hid from the Lord: my God hath forgotten me!” in opposition to his word, who hath said, “I will never leave thee; I will never forsake thee!” But I cannot dwell longer on this part; and you can easily apply these remarks to other cases. I proceed,

## II. TO JUSTIFY THE EXPRESSION OF ASTONISHMENT ON THE PART OF CHRIST.

It is said that “he *marvelled* because of their unbelief.” — Unbelief is altogether unreasonable and unbecoming.

1. How unreasonable, for instance, was *the unbelief which our LORD witnessed in the days of his flesh*. The unbelief of these men at Nazareth was marked with great stupidity, and chargeable with great folly. For, consider *what opportunities they had been favored with* of seeing our Lord’s early character, and of listening to his propitious doctrines. The superior sanctity, which marked his childhood, ought to have made strong impressions on their minds; and ought to have led them to investigate carefully, and to receive honestly the convictions of their minds. An unbelief so blind as theirs was surely unreasonable. Consider, also, *their confession of his wisdom and power*. “From whence,” exclaimed they, “hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that such mighty works are wrought by his hands?” The fact they admitted; the evidences were too strong to be resisted. Why, then, did they not at once proceed to draw the only rational inference, namely, that he was a divine person? Their unbelief was unreasonable. Advert, also, to *the nature of the excuses*

*they presented* for it. They talked of the meanness of his education—of the poverty of his circumstances—of the narrowness of his means. Why, these were the very circumstances that ought to have induced faith. For if natural causes could not produce such surprising effects, how very rational to conclude that they were produced by supernatural causes. Then, *their possession of the ancient Scriptures* left them without excuse. They had the prophecies of Isaiah; and they might have read them if they had not wilfully neglected so to do. His fifty third chapter would have told them that Christ was to be “as a root out of a dry ground;” that he would be destitute of any outward “form, or comeliness, or beauty,” which should lead men to “desire him.” All this justifies the strong sensation of surprise, on the part of our Savior, at so much insensibility. “He marvelled;” he who well knew what was in man, and how depraved and how very unreasonable man naturally was—even He was surprised; even the Searcher of hearts “*marvelled*, because of the unbelief” they manifested!

2. *The same unreasonableness attaches to modern as to ancient unbelief.* Let us consider this in reference to the various descriptions of unbelief we noticed in the first part of the discourse.

*First.* On what do *our modern infidels* rest their unbelief? Do they plead WANT OF EVIDENCE? How base and ungrounded is their assertion! Let them study our Christianity; let them institute a strict comparison between its various parts; let them look at the long chain of prophecies by which it was introduced; let them consider the miracles by which its verity was attested—its pure salutary truths and doctrines; let them mark the astonishing rapidity of its early progress—its progress in opposition to all obstructions, and to the most determined hostility; and that it came not with any appeal to the passions, or proclaiming any truce to the vices, but with the force of truth alone, and denouncing all the vices. Let them, I say, consider this body and weight of evidence; which, if considered aright, is more than enough to weigh down all their objections, and which, if rejected, exposes them most justly to the charge of unreasonable unbelief. But our religion, they allege, contains in it *so many MYSTERIES*, and that these ought to lead them to its rejection. But this very circumstance, *we* say, is an additional argument for faith. If Christianity told us nothing but what the book of nature teaches, it could not be from God. Surely, if God write a book, it must contain something of which the ear hath not heard, which the eye hath not seen, and of which the human heart hath not conceived. As in the earth, while surveying the works of nature, and perceiving their peculiar skill and adaptation, we infer that they are the produce of a Divine hand; so, in what are termed the mysteries



of religion, we see abundant proofs of a Divine hand. And besides, if we are to doubt because of what is mysterious, where is scepticism to end? We see mystery all around us; and if we are not to believe till we can comprehend, we shall never believe at all. It is absurd, it is monstrous, to reject the truth of God, because it teaches us something which, but for it, we could not understand! And further *peculiar* criminality and unreasonableness attaches to modern than could attach to ancient infidelity. On us "the ends of the world are come;" to us the system of Christianity is more fully explained, and the glory of God shines forth with greater radiancy, in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The beneficial effects of the system have been illustrated by many striking facts in our days, which were not known to our fathers. The argument for Christianity is stronger; it has grown, and is still growing, with the growth of information. On the infidels of these days, therefore, the benevolent Savior may well look down with mingled emotions of surprise and indignation; he may well be alike grieved for the hardness of their hearts, and surprised at the strength of their infatuation!

*Secondly.* And what shall I say of the unreasonableness of the next class, — a *disbelief of the principal doctrines of Christianity*? Is not this *unreasonable*? When a man writes a book for his fellow-men, if his object be to instruct philosophers and the learned, he adapts his style to them; but if he be anxious to instruct the mass of men — if he would benefit the unlearned, and those who are incapable of deep and critical inquiry, — then he writes in a plain and popular style, that all who read may at once comprehend his meaning. Now, apply this to the book which God has given. The poor and uneducated form the mass of the people; *their* instruction and benefit must therefore be regarded; and if he be a good and gracious God, then a plain and simple man will be able to collect his meaning from the plain language and letter of his word. Those who reject the great truths of the Bible pretend to say that a great part of the Bible is not to be understood according as the words appear on the surface. They tell us about corruptions; and they explain much of its contents away into Eastern similes. But let any plain, unsophisticated man, any man whose mind is not prejudiced and perverted by tortured criticisms, — let any honest man regard the *corruptions*, as they term them, of the Scriptures, and he will find them to be the very vital and important truths of the system. But there is some reason to think that men are beginning to get tired of this *rational* system; and to see that they must either follow Scripture, *as it is*, or go at once to Deism: they begin now to find that the half-way house, as it has been termed, between Deism and Chris-

tianity, is untenable. And let those who attempt to take refuge there, let these half way-house-men take care, lest God should say to them, as he said to ancient Chaldea — “Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee !”

3. But the form of unbelief which is the most extraordinary, is that of *the neglecters of salvation* : those who hold the truth, but hold it in unrighteousness. You will not surely account us your enemies if we tell you the truth. We say that there are many who admit the truth of the gospel, and yet neglect its great salvation. If we speak of such characters, we must speak in the terms which belong to them : we accuse you of conduct which, if it were exemplified in the common affairs of life, would justly expose you to the charge of inconsistency and irrationality. I will endeavor to set out your conduct before you, and I entreat you to let your consciences go with me. *You say* that you believe the gospel to be of God ; that “at the first it began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him ; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will ;” you say that you believe in his Scripture ; — and yet — you live in habitual opposition to what you know to be the requirements, and what you know to be the privileges of this gospel ! *You say* that you believe in the existence of a God ; a God who is present in all places ; who is intimately acquainted with all your thoughts, and words, and actions ; — and yet — you go on, day after day, in a career which you know he must hate ! *You say* that you believe him to be a just God ; and that he who is the Maker of all the earth shall be the Judge of all the earth ; and that he has prepared the thunderbolts of his wrath, that he may take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not his will ; — and yet — you continually defy this authority, and expose yourselves to this vengeance ! *You say* you believe that you have immortal souls ; that when you leave this world you must go into another state ; that this other state must be regulated by your present character and conduct ; that there is a state of happiness for the holy, and of misery for the unholy ; and yet — you act as if you had no souls ; as if there were no future state ; as if heaven were a delusion, and hell were a chimera ! — *You say* that you believe Jesus Christ came from heaven to earth to seek and to save the lost ; that he was delivered for the offences of men, and rose again for their justification, and returned to heaven, that he might intercede for them and send them down all the blessings of his salvation ; and you come to hear his truth proclaimed to you Sabbath after Sabbath ; and, such is the force of habit, you would be quite uncomfortable if you did not listen to these things ; —



and yet — you are quite content to have no experience of this Savior's pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace! — I might pursue this train of remark; but from what has been said, you see how clearly a charge of the most marvellous unbelief and absurdity may be made out against you. You kiss the Savior, like Judas, and like him you betray him for this world's good. You call him Lord, but you do not the things which he says. You sleep as quietly in your beds, after we have assured you, upon his authority, that you are in danger of eternal perdition, as if you had never heard a word about the matter! and it is more than probable that some of you will do so this very night! And how is this? Is it not marvellous? Well may Christ be grieved and wonder! Is it not marvellous insensibility to what you acknowledge to be so valuable and important? Is it not a proof of marvellous unbelief, to disregard a blessing which you yourselves allow to be attainable? Is it not a marvellous disregard of all the thunders of the divine wrath, which you must confess are hanging over your heads? O that you were willing to follow up the convictions of your own minds! that you would not attempt to get rid of them in an unhallowed way! that you would cherish them by reading the Scriptures and pious books, by meditation, by prayer, by intercourse with Christians, and by the use of all the means which God has appointed to save souls from the wrath to come!

4. I speak to those, also, who, though not loving sin, but truly convinced of their sinfulness and consequent danger, hating sin, and desirous of being freed from it; yet *go on for weeks, and months, and even years, without finding the mercy which God has promised*, — without obtaining the blessings of pardon, of adoption, of holiness, of consolation, of the Holy Spirit's influence. Come, and let me expostulate with you. There are many such in all our congregations, and in all our societies. It is a fact, that if we have a thousand members, we find at least a hundred, to whose general seriousness we can make no exception, whose conduct is marked by regularity; who yet cannot, with satisfaction to their ministers and fellow Christians, declare what God has done for their souls. There are, no doubt, therefore, some such present this evening. Now, let me expostulate with you: look at your case. O that I may be assisted to say something which shall lead you this night to lay hold on Christ! something that shall make you ashamed of your unbelief in my Savior and yours! something that shall convince you that, when he opens his arms to receive you, you have *no right* to run away from him; that you have *no right* to close your ears to his inviting voice; that it is *your duty*, as well as your interest, to lay hold on his mercy, and to receive the blessings which he

has pressed on your acceptance in the exuberance of his kindness ! Now, what does he say ? — “ Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord : Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” But I need not repeat these promises : what you want is, not the *knowledge* of them, — you have heard them read a hundred times ; — no ; what you want is, to *believe*, to *embrace* them. These promises point out *you* — you yourselves — as the very persons who want these good things. And O, consider that these promises are confirmed — confirmed by a solemn oath ; “ that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, they might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them.” You have heard God’s *promise*, — now hear God’s *oath*. O, infinite condescension ! You doubt his word — shame on you ! but he does not desert you for your sin. Now, hear it, penitent ! hear the oath of thy God. We have it on record in his own book : it is written for your comfort. Listen — “ As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked ; but that the wicked turn from his way and live : turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways ; for why will ye die ? ” God tells you, by his life, that he is ready to save you — to save you *now*. And this promise, and this oath, have been sealed by the blood of Christ ; and “ he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ? ” And this promise, and this oath, have been confirmed by the resurrection of Christ. By this we are taught that the sacrifice he presented was accepted — that God is satisfied ; and that there is nothing even in his justice to hinder him from pardoning you. Hence the language of the apostle to the Hebrews ; — “ Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect ! ” and so on. O, what comfort is contained in these words ! God is “ the God of *peace* ! ” Why, we might have been charged to tell you that God is “ a man of war.” — But no ; we have to proclaim him to you as “ the God of peace.” He has a peaceful disposition towards you ; and he has proved this by raising up Jesus Christ from the dead.

It is possible that *we* may have erred in telling you that this is your *privilege*, and not dwelling sufficiently upon it as your *duty*. It is your duty to believe ; it is a great *crime* you are guilty of in not coming to God for the pardon of your sins, when he has told you so plainly and

so repeatedly that he waits to bestow that pardon. You believe the word of your *fellow-men*: to-morrow you will take their word, perhaps, twenty times in the day, in the course of your business; but you will not take the *word of God*; you must behold something extraordinary, you must have some miracle performed, before you believe God! And is not this most marvellous, most unreasonable? Will it not be infinitely better to take him at his word, and receive the blessing? Why, *part* of his word you do believe: — you do believe his *threatenings*! when he says that “the wicked man shall surely die,” this you firmly believe. But another part of his word, — that very part which is most suited to your case, — you put away from you! You say that you are not ready yet; that you are not worthy yet! O the marvellous absurdity of this unbelief! Men under the influence of this vile principle will absolutely believe all but that which they are required to believe, — that which most of all concerns them to believe, — that “THIS IS A FAITHFUL SAYING, AND WORTHY OF ALL ACCEPTATION, THAT JESUS CHRIST CAME INTO THE WORLD TO SAVE SINNERS.” I now proclaim it to you: — take it home to yourselves: — say,

“Who did for *every* sinner die,  
Hath surely died for *me*.”

For *me* he hath obtained that redemption which is of so much value; that, without which I must for ever have perished! “Sayest thou this? — Then *thou* art the very man for my Savior! *Thou* art the very man on whom he now looks down, on whom he now waits to be gracious!

I have already trespassed so unwarrantably upon your time, that I must leave you to apply this train of thought to other cases of unbelief which will present themselves readily to your mind. We may learn from this subject,

1. *The marvellous corruption of human nature, from whence all this unbelief originates.* If man was as he came out of the hands of his Maker, he would receive with simple, confiding love, all that he has said, and listen implicitly to all his assurances. Faith has its seat in the heart; and so has unbelief; hence we read of “an evil *heart* of unbelief.” Man is very far gone from original righteousness. Now, as unbelief took us away from God, so faith alone can bring us back to God, and prepare us for an ultimate admission into heaven. See also,

2. *The necessity of the agency of the Holy Spirit.* This is necessary, that faith may be inspired, and kept in exercise, and brought to maturity. If unbelief be in the heart by nature, it is not the nicest train of reasoning, it is not all the power of moral suasion, that can produce faith. True faith is *supernatural*; the apostle tells the Philippians



that it had been "given them to believe in his name." *You* must believe: believing is your act; but it is an act of a heart renewed by the grace of the Holy Spirit; by the same almighty and efficacious power by which Christ was raised from the dead. Look at the case of infidels; other means are employed in abundance, but they remain infidels still; while others have been converted from infidelity in the absence of all human means. Look at the case of Saul of Tarsus; he was a most bigoted Pharisee, and a furious and determined persecutor; and he was not made into a sincere and humble Christian, and a zealous and successful preacher, by books, or by human argumentation. The miraculous light, and the voice from heaven, might arouse his attention, but it was by an immediate and direct interference of the Holy Spirit that the change was effected, and true faith was inspired. The conversion of Vanderkemp, also, is a case fully in point; a conversion scarcely less remarkable than that of the apostle Paul. From a German infidel, infidelity, perhaps, of the most specious and dangerous kind, Vanderkemp, without human interference, became a zealous Christian. I do not mean to say that good books, that wise and pious information, are to be despised; but I do mean to say, that the great fault is in men's *hearts*; and that it is necessary that the heart should be prepared by the operation of the Spirit, to receive the truth in the love of it. And that, though the mind may be prepared in some measure by knowledge, yet that true faith is the immediate effect of a direct influence of the Holy Spirit.

As to all the instances of unbelief we have specified, and as to all others which may occur, *go direct to God*; pray against your unbelief; beseech him to cure you of this dreadful infatuation.

And let *the disciples* — let those who are set to guide souls to Christ, let all the church say, "LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH!"

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## SERMON II.

THE NATURE AND EFFECT OF JUSTIFYING FAITH.

BY THE RIGHT REV. C. J. BLOOMFIELD, D. D.,  
BISHOP OF LONDON.

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"With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."—ROMANS I. 10.

THE apostle declares that his heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel was, that they might be saved; but they utterly mistook the way of salvation, imagining it to be by a work which they could themselves

achieve, upon the foundation of their own merit, as doers of the law. They refused to accept as a free gift that which was offered to them by God in Christ, and chose rather to be justified by the deeds of the law than by him who alone is holy. "Being ignorant," says the apostle, "of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." The righteousness of God is that righteousness which God bestows upon all believers in Christ — not actual holiness; but, justifying them, they have the privilege of being regarded as righteous, and treated as such, for the sake of the true, intrinsic, substantial holiness of Christ. "For," continues the apostle, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

Perfect, unceasing obedience, was the requirement of the law; but perfect obedience was impracticable to fallen man; therefore righteousness was unattainable by the deeds of the law. But was it attainable by the gospel? "What saith *it*?" — as asks the apostle. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach. That, if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

It appears, then, that, in order to salvation, two things are indispensably necessary; the one, a plenary and heartfelt faith in Jesus as a crucified and glorified Savior; the other, an open and oral confession of him in that character before men, agreeably to his own precept and promise, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man confess before the angels of God." By specifying faith and confession as leading to certain results — the one to righteousness, that is, to being accounted righteous in the sight of God, the other to final salvation — the apostle has clearly intimated the *inseparableness*, and, in some measure, the *unity* of both. At all events, he has spoken of the two as *inseparable*; and these words may be urged as an unanswerable refutation of two perilous errors, one of which many are found to avow in words, while the other is by many more exemplified in practice; for one sect pretend that religious feeling or principle is enough without a particular profession of it; while the other say that profession alone is all that is required of us.

Let us consider the nature of those two great acts of religion of which the apostle speaks as being necessary to the perfection of the Christian character — belief and confession. The point which claims our attention, is —

I. THAT MAN BELIEVETH WITH THE HEART UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS.

The apostle does not say that man believeth with the *understanding*, which is especially considered to be the seat or instrument of belief; but "man believeth with the *heart* unto righteousness." And to the same effect he cautions the Hebrew Christians: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil *heart* of unbelief, in departing from the living God." And so it was with the first preaching of the gospel by our blessed Lord himself; its reception or rejection was occasioned, not by the sagacity, the strength of reason, the power of induction possessed by his hearers, but by the state in which their *hearts* were: "But that on good ground are they, which, in an honest and good *heart*, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." Philip told the pious Ethiopian eunuch, who was endeavoring in vain to comprehend the meaning of the evangelical prophet, "If thou believest with all thine *heart*, thou mayest be baptized."

Now, this is the very expression by which the Scripture describes that love of God which must be felt by all faithful and teachable children. We must *believe*, as we must *love*, with all our heart. The truth is, my brethren — and it is a truth which cannot be too frequently nor too earnestly impressed upon mankind in an age of religious inquisitiveness — the truth is, the affections have a great deal to do with faith. The edifice of Christian faith is not one which can be built up solely by arguments and inferences upon the basis of historical verity, but it must be raised, and strengthened, and drawn out into full and fair proportion, by devotion, and love, and thankfulness — by the powerful master-building of the Spirit. "Faith," the apostle says, "is the evidence of things not seen." It is the certain belief of truths incapable of demonstration to our limited understandings; the sure expectation of things to come to pass hereafter; a belief and an expectation resting altogether upon the revelation of the promise of God. Now, as things future and invisible cannot be objects of sense or knowledge, properly so called, these must be embraced by the mind upon some other principle than that upon which the understanding builds its ordinary conclusions — and that principle is a firm reliance upon the word of God. We judge him faithful who hath promised; but we can form no correct judgment of his moral perfection, talk of them as we may, unless we feel an earnest desire to know God as he is; and such a desire is wholly incompatible with a set of affections disordered by unholy wishes and habits.

We are assured, by our blessed Lord himself, that no man can come to him as a Savior unless he be drawn of God; and God will not draw



to him the heart which delights in the works of the devil or the lusts of the flesh, nor the heart which prides itself upon its virtues. The man who is strongly attached to sinful practices, or possessed of a high opinion of his own powers and merits, does not wish the gospel. In the one case it would lay an irksome restraint upon his appetites, and in the other it would mortify his pride. He comes to the examination of truth prejudiced, and is, therefore, a partial judge. All his natural passions are marshalled in array, to oppose the admission of affections which require a teachable mind. He rejects the gospel of Jesus Christ because he disbelieves it, but he disbelieves it because he *dislikes* it; and, wishing it not to be true, he easily persuades himself it is false. This is an evil heart of unbelief. Look closely to the life and proceedings of an infidel, and you will, in most instances, discover abundant reason for his unwillingness to embrace that faith which commands an undeviating course of holiness — which commands humility, and abstinence from the things of the flesh, and a contempt of the world; and if you discover some symptoms, not only of a mind unconvinced by the evidences of the gospel, but of a heart rebelling against its precepts, reject the testimony of that man, pay no regard to his authority; he is not an unbiassed nor a candid judge. “If our gospel be hid,” said the apostle, “it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

But there is a speculative assent to the truth of Christianity which, although it exempts a man from the imputation of *actual* unbelief, is yet not a belief unto righteousness, because it is not believing with the *heart*. He may entertain no doubt of the authenticity of the gospel of Jesus Christ, nor of the obligatory nature of his precepts, and yet, if his heart remain unengaged in the question and work of religion, there is no practical application of his knowledge, in his own particular case, as one for whom Christ died. There is no seeking *for*, and, consequently, no indwelling *of* the Spirit; and, therefore, none of the fruits of the Spirit can be produced. This, then, is an inoperative, unfruitful faith; it has no root in the heart, and the heart is every thing in religion. I would rather see a Christian zealously affected and engaged in the service of the Lord with some errors of doctrine — nay, even of practice, if they do not affect his moral standing — than a formal speculative believer of the gospel, who is correct in his interpretation of Scripture, but takes no delight in experiencing the gospel promises, nor in exemplifying its power to distinguish him from the world.

We may believe with the understanding. Indeed, if our understanding be not greatly warped by our inclinations, we must believe the gospel, but it will not be a believing unto righteousness — that is to say, it will not be a justifying faith, such a faith as will induce Almighty God to deal with us as though we were justified. It can be only when we believe with the heart, when our affections, and endeavors, and wishes, are engaged on the side of Christ — when we not only understand, but feel, what he has done for us as our Savior — when we not only admit the truth of what Scripture declares concerning him, but rejoice in his merit, and make it the grand basis of our hopes, and the single principle of action — that we can be justified.

But, since “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,” it becomes an inquiry of infinite concernment to us to determine if our belief be unto righteousness. By its fruits we shall know it. If the fountain-head of faith be in the heart, its golden streams will overflow in all our words and actions. Do we experience a sincere delight in the work of religion — in the contemplation of God’s experienced and covenanted mercies? — In his worship? — In the study of his word? — Are we fervent and persevering in prayer, not for the good things of this world, but for an increase of the gifts and graces of Christianity? — Do we find solid and enduring comfort under all the trials of life in the reflection that we possess an interest in the kingdom which Christ has purchased? — Is it a subject of deep anxiety and regret that all the thoughts and wishes of our hearts are not more directly bent towards that kingdom; and are we continually laboring to give them that direction? — Is our love of Christ a constraining love — a love which compels us to love one another, because God in Christ hath loved us? — Are these feelings and habits in the mind in a progressive state? — Are we more and more detached from the world, and rising above the care and love of those objects of pursuit which once were very delightful to us? This, and nothing less than this, in its consequences and results, is what St. Paul terms “believing with the heart unto righteousness” — not merely the assent of our understanding, but the consent of our wills. To believe that Jesus died for the sins of mankind without accepting him for your own Savior — to accept him formally for your Savior without a spirit of devotedness to his service — this is not a belief unto righteousness. A heart wounded, and contrite, and longing for the enjoyment of God’s sure promises of mercy and truth — rejoicing in these promises as established in Jesus Christ — a heart purified and renewed by the Spirit of holiness — a heart abhorring sin and all that leads to sin — a heart that rejects and casts out all opinion of its own holiness or merit — a heart



that loves to meditate on the things of God, and that ascends to his foot-stool in holy aspirations — this is a heart that believeth unto righteousness.

I come now to the second division of our text.

## II. WITH THE MOUTH CONFSSION IS MADE UNTO SALVATION.

It is manifest that, by *confession*, the apostle here means an open profession of faith in Christ crucified — a profession made before men. We are commanded to avoid all ostentation of piety or of charity; to pray, not that we may be seen of men; to give alms so secretly that our right hand may not know what our left hand doeth; the sum of which precepts is — we are not to perform any act of religious duty looking to the praise of man for our reward. But, if we are actuated by a desire to promote the glory of God and the spiritual welfare of others, then the public manifestation of piety is not only innocent, but a most important part of our religious duty. In no respect should we live or die for ourselves, neither is our religion to be of such a nature; we ourselves are only parties in it; we must believe and pray for the confirmation and enlargement of our own comfort, and strength, and hope, but we must do this with a view to the honor of God and the growth of Christian piety. We are commanded to confess Christ before men — to provoke one another to good works — to let our light shine before men, not that they may admire and applaud the lustre as emanating from ourselves, but that they may be guided by it to the First Source of light and truth — that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven.

But how, it may be asked, how is it possible for a creature to do honor to his Creator? How can man glorify God — the eternal, the all-powerful, the all-wise? What accession of honor can accrue to him from the united testimony of a sinful race, who from the throne of his glory beholds and rejoices in the blessed spirits of light, who are for ever occupied in his adoration and praise? True, indeed, it is, the Lord of heaven and earth can receive no accession to his own intrinsic glory from the feeble praises or polluted services of an infirm and sinful race; yet he pleads with us, and encourages us, and commands us to serve him according to the imperfect constitution of our nature; and surely the praises of millions and millions of reasonable souls, the offerings of devoted hearts, the uplifted hands of the redeemed of the earth, the hallelujahs of countless myriads presented before the throne of God and of the Lamb, may seem not unworthy to please even the ear of Omnipotence, to mingle with those sounds of melody in which the Eternal Spirit spake of Him who was, and is, and is to come.

We need not ascend into heaven for a reason for that command which directs us to make open confession of our faith before men. With the first believers it was the test of sincerity. It was then a duty attended with danger, to be discharged in the face of persecution, at the risk of bonds, starvation, and even death itself. To have denied Christ from the fear of these would have been to betray the cause of God, and give a triumph to sin and Satan; whereas confessing him, in the teeth of persecution, was the sure evidence of faith rooted in the heart, and certified to him who made it, a confession of him by the Lord himself on the day of judgment; therefore, says St. Paul, "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation." To such a trial of their sincerity many pious servants of the Lord have since been exposed in the later ages of the church, and, by their constancy in the midst of flames, have witnessed a good confession before men. If, by the providence of God in the peculiar arrangements of his government, we are protected from so fierce an ordeal, are we exempted also from the necessity of making an open profession of our faith in a crucified Savior? There are still enemies of Christ and of man's salvation in whose teeth the profession must be made. There is the evil one, who continues to oppose the progress of the gospel, and to cause the holy name of Jesus to be blasphemed — there is the proud unbeliever, who rejects the counsel of God, and lightly esteems the rock of his salvation — there are those false teachers who still labor to poison the fountain of living waters with the impure streams of human tradition — there are those ungodly men who use the liberty of the gospel for a cloak of maliciousness, and disclaim the eternal obligation of God's moral law — there is a vain, deceitful world, which persuades us to rejoice and repose in its pageantry and pleasures, and to hear its delusions, and to be loud in its praises, while we are careless about the work of salvation, and name the name of Christ in words of formal acknowledgment: — all these are to be confronted, and confounded, and put to shame, by the public confession of united believers. And, lastly, there are hard-hearted and luke-warm children of this generation who are to be awakened and allured to piety by the moving spectacle of Christians openly and professedly engaged in the all-important work of setting forward the glory of God, and the salvation of sinful men.

Now, it is manifest that this notion of Christian confession implies the duty of public and common worship, a compliance with the outward forms and proprieties of religion. It is upon this principle that the very institutions of Christianity which we minister and reduce to use — the sacraments which the Lord has appointed as means of grace and badges of discipleship — and, lastly, the duty of Christian communion

— are founded. The church of Christ could never be visibly and distinctly set apart from the world; it could never be, as its founder described it, a city set on a hill that cannot be hid, without the public and visible exercises of religion, the common resorting together, and unanimous confession of the great truths of the gospel.

What a powerful and convincing testimony it is to the importance of these truths! What an awakening, moving spectacle to the doubtful, or the careless, is that of an assembled congregation of believers proclaiming with one heart and voice their allegiance and thanksgiving to one common God their Father — their high and holy trust in Him who died for their sins, and rose again for their justification! “But, if all prophecy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all; and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.” Thus it appears that, independently of the apostle’s command not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, and of the apostolic practice which sanctioned the Lord’s day as a Christian sabbath, a day for religious meeting — independently of the comfort and refreshment which individual Christians find in the opportunity of common worship — the duty of it is rendered indispensable by the acknowledged efficacy of example, by which the attention of all men may be turned to the importance of religion, and an opening made for grace and conversion, and so for glorifying God.

It is chiefly upon this ground the apostles urged upon their converts a punctual attendance to religion, and a strict regard to the decency of their devotional exercises as a means of common edification and the building up of the household of Christ. And this is a sufficient answer to those persons who pretend that they can worship God as well in the privacy of the chamber as in the solemn assemblies of the Christian Sabbath. Not to dwell upon the argument that those who neglect the *public* worship of God are, for the most part, unfrequent and careless in their *private* devotions, we would remind them that our religious duty is not merely a question between God and ourselves alone — that it has a reference to the salvation of others as well as our own, to the advancement of God’s glory and the extension of his dear Son’s kingdom upon earth. But the manifestation of our own allegiance is an essential principle of practical Christianity; the strength and allegiance of our faith must be made visible not only in preserving us unblameable, but in putting forth an attractive power, drawing into the sphere of our influence some of those who are floating careless upon the surface of human existence and bringing them within the range of spiritual thanksgiving and consolation. How powerful



an encouragement will it be to every penitent person to be exemplary in the observance of all the stated offices of piety, if, while he is advancing in the race before him, he is urging others forward in the same course, confirming the doubtful, awakening the careless, and drawing the feet of the loiterer into paths of pleasantness and peace ! And with what a constraining force ought these motives to bind the consciences of those servants of God, whom his providence has placed in the higher walks of life, to let their light be seen of men — I say what a motive to abstain from all engagements which prevent their domestics from improving the opportunities of the Christian Sabbath — in fact, from those engagements and amusements which are a glaring violation of the decencies of an established religion, an open insult to Christian piety — and to encourage and assist their families and servants to turn to the best account that little time which is permitted to them, by the habits of society, for doing honor to God, and acquiring a saving knowledge of his love.

I need not, after what has been said, dwell upon the mercifulness of the provision which our heavenly Father has made for the wants of his children in appointing a Sabbath, and instituting a church, and ordaining ministers, not merely to offer a daily sacrifice for his people, like the Jewish priesthood, but to be their spiritual friends, guides, and comforters, to watch over their souls as those who must give account ; nor need I, after what has been said, endeavor to prove that it is a subject of pious thanksgiving to any neighborhood when any enlarged opportunities are afforded to the inhabitants of profiting by the advantages held out to them by a scriptural church. But let me remind you that he who builds it up and plants the watchman thereon will come again, and expect the fruits of his vineyard in increased attention to the public duties of piety, in an enlarged acquaintance with the word of God, a devout and delighted listening to the ministry of reconciliation, a strict compliance with the gospel rule of holiness of heart, a visible increase of Christian zeal, and the enlargement of the Redeemer's fold.

If the sanctuary which has now been set apart by solemn prayer from all common and trivial uses, and consecrated to the noblest occupation of reasonable creatures, to the common worship of their Creator — if it should set open its doors in vain, and if the gracious invitations of your Savior are unanswered, may not the Lord appeal to common sense and justice, and say, “ Oh, inhabitants of Jerusalem, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard ! What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it ? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes ! ”

But, while I enlarge upon the duty of an open, an outward confession of our faith in Christ, and the consequent obligation of public worship, I would caution you, in the last place, against entertaining the belief that the public exercises of religion are *religion itself*. They are its aids, its expression, its demonstration, but they are not its essence, nor its substance. No man can be truly religious who neglects them; but a strict observance of them will not supply the place, nor remedy the defect, of a single Christian grace. Let me, then, in conclusion, recur to the beautiful words which should occupy the first and the last place in our exhortations and your reflections—the seat of true religion is the heart; it is there that faith is enshrined in humble, holy thoughts—it is from thence that streams of charity flow—it is from thence that prayer ascends at once to the throne of the Eternal—it is there that holy sorrow for sin, and humble hope, must dwell. And Oh, may he who discerns its inmost thoughts, and who alone can purify and establish it unblameable in holiness—may he make it in every one of us a fit habitation for himself, a decent and appropriate temple for his Holy Spirit, that we may dwell in him, and he in us, while we continue in his church upon earth, that our names may be inscribed among “THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND CHURCH OF THE FIRST-BORN, WHOSE NAMES ARE WRITTEN IN HEAVEN!”

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## SERMON III.

THE CHARACTER AND PRIVILEGES OF A CHRISTIAN.

BY REV. J. PARSONS.

“A Christian.”—1 PET. iv. 16.

It has been customary, my brethren, in all ages, and in all nations, to designate those systems which have exercised a considerable influence over the opinions and over the practice of mankind, by names either derived from the systems themselves, or the titles of him by whom they were respectively founded. Illustrations of this fact may be abundantly found both in the annals of ancient and modern philosophy; and also in ancient and modern religion. Such a mode of designation has justly been considered to be perfectly admissible, and indeed it is absolutely necessary, for the purpose of preserving the memory of those great events which have transpired both in the social and moral history of mankind.

On this principle it was, that when Jesus Christ, the Son of God, appeared upon the earth, for the purpose of announcing important doctrines with regard to the government of Jehovah, and the destinies of mankind, and gathered around him a circle of followers, these followers became designated by a name derived from him to whom they rendered their homage, and by which title they have been properly and permanently distinguished. As their organization and their augmentation in number gave signs of the permanency and establishment of their cause, they either chose or received a title which is memorable, appropriate, and comprehensive — a title which, altogether merging the minor distinctions of rank, of origin, and of nation, proclaimed the fact of their union around a common Savior, and under a common religion. That title was the title of *Christians*.

It is stated by the evangelical historian that “the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch,” a Gentile city, which, as we are informed in the Acts of the Apostles, received one of the earliest messages of the gospel, and had a multitude of converts to the Lord. By that appellation they are still to be distinguished, and it must remain as the badge of augmenting multitudes till the world itself shall fade away and be dissolved. It is of little importance to us to ascertain distinctly and properly what may be comprehended in many of those appellations by which the children of men are distinguished; but it is of vast importance to every individual, that he should understand perfectly and distinctly what is comprehended in the name and character of Christian, comprising, as it does, all that belongs to your present welfare, and your final and everlasting state.

I would observe, my brethren, that while, on the present occasion, it is our intention to present before you what is comprehended in the appellation of *Christian*, we shall, if spared to the evening of this day fortnight, present to you what is comprehended in the character of an *infidel*. Requesting, however, your attention now to the appellation which is particularly before us, we propose,

I. To consider in what consists the Christian’s character and Christian’s privileges: and,

II. We shall endeavor to impress those exhortations, which, from the view of a Christian’s character and a Christian’s privileges, may justly and properly arise.

I. IN WHAT CONSISTS A CHRISTIAN’S CHARACTER AND A CHRISTIAN’S PRIVILEGES.

1st. With regard to what constitutes a Christian’s *character*.

That there have been not a few misapprehensions and perversions



on this subject, will doubtless be evident to every one who is at all acquainted with, and able to judge of, the past history of mankind. By the avowed enemies of Christianity many a falsehood and many a perversion has been uttered; and even by those who have been recognized among its professed friends, grievously mistaken notions have been entertained and expressed, which have been incalculably injurious to the promotion of the cause. As it is possible that not a few may now be present whose notions on this subject may be far from proper and correct, we shall endeavor to present, in a few brief particulars, all that is stated upon it in the inspired record, by which alone our views are to be regulated. And here you will observe,

(1.) A Christian is one who *fully and cordially believes the testimony that is given concerning Christ*. The truth is evident, and is palpable, that the claims of him who is the founder of our religion should be accurately and properly estimated, and that whatever he is declared to be, in the institutes of religion, should be fully and universally embraced. The question then arises — what is the precise nature and import of that testimony which is given to us concerning the Founder of Christianity, the reception of which at all times is essential to the just estimate of his name? The import of that testimony is, we believe, in the first place, that the Lord Jesus Christ possesses an eternal and Divine existence in union with the Almighty Father — that he assumed human nature by virtue of his miraculous incarnation, and in which human nature he was subservient to the Father, in compliance with the everlasting counsels, being in that nature known as the Messiah, or Christ, both of which words mean “the anointed one” — that during his existence on earth he was emphatically without a stain of moral pollution, being holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners — that in that way he became the great teacher and exemplar to mankind — that he submitted to an ignominious death on the cross of Calvary, as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin, the imputation of the merit of which, through the medium of faith, is essential to secure the pardon and acceptance of man with God — that he rose again from the dead, at an appointed period, for the purposes of his own glory, and to give a solemn pledge and proof of the resurrection and immortality of mankind — that he ascended up to heaven to his Father, and to our Father, to his God and to our God, there to intercede, and there to reign as Mediator, sending down the influences of his Spirit to renovate the hearts of his people — and that, at the appointed period which has been determined, he shall come forth with glory and with splendor, for the purpose of raising and judging all the human race, and that then his mediatorial kingdom shall finally and for ever close. These various

truths, as I have now briefly stated them, we believe to be distinctly recorded in those written statements of revelation which have descended for the guidance of our faith. They are written there in characters of light, which no sophistry or infidelity can ever obscure or quench in final darkness. You will observe, that a Christian is one who believes all these truths, and cherishes them with a warm devotion of heart, and therefore called emphatically by the apostle Paul, "One chosen from the beginning to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." His mind, moreover, you will observe, becomes properly the subject of all those various emotions towards his Master, and his Master's work, which, from its nature, it is calculated to inspire. The *divinity* of Christ becomes the object of his worship; the *condescension* of Christ becomes the object of his gratitude; the *example* of Christ becomes the object of his imitation; the *atonement* of Christ becomes the object of his trust; the *glory* of Christ becomes the object of his expectation; the *reign* of Christ becomes the object of his joy; and the *re-appearance* of Christ becomes the object of his hope. Such is distinctly the nature of the Christian's faith; and they who feel not, and who believe not this, whatever may be their professions and pretensions, are to be considered, at the very best, as having but the form of religion without the power, — as having no part or lot in the matter.

(2.) We observe that a Christian is one who *permanently obeys the commandments of Christ*. Permanent obedience, it must always be remembered, is to be regarded as the proper sign of genuine and personal faith. The great design of Christianity was that of possessing a perfect and absolute empire both over the mind and over the life. The various principles contained in the testimony which has been delivered concerning Christ can be fulfilled only, satisfactorily and conclusively, in perfect spiritual obedience to the commandments which the great Redeemer has promulgated. That great spiritual fact was sufficiently proclaimed during the life-time of the Redeemer himself. "Every tree," says he, "that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore, by their fruit ye shall know them." Again, "not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven." Again, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" Again, "If any man love me, he will keep my commandments." Again, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Again, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man may lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my



friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Now, it must be very clear, that, to understand and perfectly distinguish all that is presented in the religion of the gospel, and to bring whatever is preceptive into regular and constant action, must be considered as an essential law of the Christian calling. The Christian is commanded to "crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts." He is commanded to come out and separate himself from whatever is impure and unholy in the conduct and habits of the world. He is commanded to "bring forth the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God: virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity." All these things are to be in him and abound. He is commanded to set his affections on things above, and not on things on the earth. He is commanded to make a public and open avowal of his attachment to the name of the great Redeemer, whom he professes to serve, and to dedicate every thing he possesses of wealth, of talent, or of opportunity, to the diffusion of the cause and glory of the Redeemer in the world.

It would be an insult to the principles of this great congregation to state, at length, that those only are Christians by whom these various commandments are obeyed; and I will venture to assume, for the honor of this church and people, that you will not venture to deny, that those who disobey these commandments have no title to claim the name of the great Redeemer who delivered them. I know that, in modern times especially, there are multitudes of men who *profess* the name of *Christian*, who nevertheless are open and avowed *infidels* in *principle*, and whose habits are hostile to what the great Redeemer has exemplified. And I know, too, how grievously the reputation of religion has suffered in the estimation of the world, by the crimes and pollution of votaries, which votaries are to be solemnly repudiated and renounced, as we do now solemnly repudiate and renounce them, as having no more connection with the worth and religion of the Lord Jesus Christ, than is possessed by the very spirits of the abyss themselves. If, in your own sphere of existence, you meet with those who profess to know God, and yet in practice deny him — if you meet those persons that assume the name of Christ, and yet refuse to imitate his example, and obey his commandments, we have but to pronounce respecting them, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; "These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear; clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their

own shame ; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."

(3.) We observe, in the last place, that a Christian is one *who receives his faith and holiness, and his desert in them, by the Spirit of Christ*. The fact, my brethren, which we now state, with regard to the origin of the Christian character, is one which has received, in modern, as well as in ancient times, a very general denial. It being the judgment of men, especially among the unconverted, that the dispensation of the gospel is nothing more than the dispensation of all speculative systems, so that it does not require any impulse but what arises from the intellect and affection of the human mind itself. We must state, first, the great evangelical principle which it is my desire, on the present occasion, to announce among you—that the determination and tendency of the human will towards evil is so strong, so deep, so inveterate, and so perfectly rooted, that there never would a single case occur of one individual being brought to the Redeemer, believing in the doctrines of Christ, and rendering evangelical obedience to the commandments of Christ, apart from the influence of the Spirit of God. Apart from that influence all remains as the existence of infidelity and sin ; and, if you see any thing like a state of profession which appears to argue the possibility of the approach of one who is unconverted to the character of one who is a Christian, the ornaments which are around him are but like the flowers which you have sometimes seen scattered around a corrupting corpse. They may veil the terrors and deformity of death ; they may shed a transient interest and beauty over the scene before you, but they can do no more, and they leave it a corpse still. Hear, my brethren, the record of Scripture on this subject — "But as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name ; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Again, "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Again, "No man can come unto me, except the Father draw him." Again, "The words that I speak unto you they are spirit, and they are life ; it is the Spirit that quickeneth ; it is the Spirit that giveth life." Again, "No man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." And again, "We are saved, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Savior." Thus, my brethren, we are brought to a conclusion, which cannot be mistaken, that every thing which assists to form and to perfect

a Christian's character is truly and essentially Divine; that every grace which flourishes in his heart is implanted there by the power of the Almighty; that every principle which is formed around his life, and breathes a consecrated glory, is an emanation from heaven. The Alpha and Omega — the beginning and the ending — the first and the last of a Christian's character — is the sovereign mercy of God; and to that mercy, in time and through eternity, he may well ascribe the praise. We have now presented to you that which constitutes a Christian's character: let us proceed to consider,

2nd. What constitutes a Christian's *privileges*.

The connection of the text, indeed, you will observe, speaks of the sufferings of a Christian: — “If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed.” But let it not be forgotten that the suffering of a Christian does by no means call into question the verity, or diminish the value, of his privileges; but, on the other hand, by the wonderful and mysterious arrangement of Divine mercy, these sufferings are overruled, so as to become themselves privileges and blessings. He is taught to glory in tribulation also; and the glorious fact stands for ever, that he who is born again, and who, by Divine grace, is brought into fellowship with Jesus Christ, is possessed of enjoyments, immunities, and blessings, so vast, that Divinity alone can comprehend them, and eternity alone can fulfil them. Let us now take a brief survey, and particularly enumerate the privileges which belong to a Christian. Observe,

(1.) A Christian *is justified from the guilt and condemnation of sin*. It is an ordination of heaven that the exercise of faith in the Divine testimony — especially in that department of the Divine testimony which refers to the ability of Christ to save us, and to his propitiatory sacrifice for sin — shall be the medium of imputing the merit of Christ to the believer, so that he who believes is justified, is counted holy — that is the meaning of justification — is counted holy before God, no longer in a state of condemnation, no longer in peril of perdition, no longer in peril at the judgment, but secure of acceptance there; “we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” This justification once bestowed is irrevocable and irreversible, containing a final and inalienable title to the skies.

(2.) A Christian *possesses friendship and constant intercourse with*



*God.* The removal of the guilt and mental alienation, by which, in a state of nature, he was characterized, is connected with the favor and kindness of God, from whom he was once estranged. Listen, Christian, to the statement of the subject, if you think it presumption — “We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the veil — that is to say, his flesh.” “In him we have boldness, and access with confidence, by the faith of him.” “We have access by one spirit unto the Father.” “We have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” The Christian is a child of God, and enjoys all the fulness of God, which is comprehended in the protection of a father’s arm, the wisdom of a father’s counsels, the constancy of a father’s care, and the tenderness of a father’s heart.

(3.) A Christian *possesses the certainty of victory over death.* The terrors of death arise, legitimately, only from the curse upon creation, and the fear of the punishment of eternity. The curse and the terrors of punishment in a Christian are removed; and, therefore, the fear of death is perfectly and entirely destroyed. We, therefore, may say, in the beautiful language of the apostle Paul, in the second chapter of Hebrews, “Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also, himself, likewise took part of the same.” Why? — “that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death — that is, the devil; and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were, all their life-time, subject to bondage.” We, therefore, may say, in the language of the same apostle, as he looked down to the coldness of the grave, and contemplated the terrors of the last enemy, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But, thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Other men, without exception, shall fall beneath the stroke of the king of terrors, in hopeless and helpless ruin; but the Christian enters into his territory that he may be the victim of the conqueror, but the destroyer of the desolater; and thus death must have his empire, that the Christian may frustrate and trample him under his feet. And,

(4.) The Christian has *the prospect of perfect and immortal happiness and glory.* For, why is it that he is born again? Why is it that he is brought to the exercise of repentance, and the exercise of faith? And why is it that he is made to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts, but for the single purpose that he may enter into life, and be saved? “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again into a

lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

In a few words, my brethren, contemplate the future hopes of him who is a Christian. At the moment of his departure, the disembodied spirit enters into the paradise of the Redeemer, where, being absent from the body, it is present with the Lord, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body. At the appointed coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, with the shout of the archangel, and the trump of God, his flesh shall answer the summons of the trumpet by rising from the dust, not in corruption, but in incorruption; not in dishonor, but in glory; not in weakness, but in power; not a natural body, but a spiritual body; not bearing the image of the earthly, but bearing the image of the heavenly; shaped into the likeness of his Lord. Standing in his perfected nature, at the right hand of his Judge, the Judge shall render to him his applause in the presence of an assembled universe, and then will ratify his entrance into bliss—that bliss which comprehends whatever the love of God can prompt, whatever the wisdom of God can arrange, whatever the power of God can impart—that bliss which no sin can pollute—that bliss which no sorrow can darken—that bliss which no time can impair—that bliss which no change can affect—that bliss which no calamity can destroy—that bliss which remains like the throne of God, firm, perfect, unchangeable, and for ever.

Here, then, my brethren, is presented to you a brief enumeration of the Christian's privileges—and, my hearers, what think you of them? Deem them not, we entreat you, the inventions of a deceiver. Deem them not, we entreat you, the dreams of an enthusiast. They are the actual, palpable attendants of the course of every pilgrim towards eternity, clothed in the righteousness of Christ, excepting Jesus himself be an impostor, and this, the record of his love, be a lie. No, my hearers! they arise not like the unreal, empty vision that mocks the parched and weary traveller of the oriental desert, setting before him the lovely green sward, and the shadowy grove, and the bright and refreshing stream; and, as he nears it, expecting to receive his repose, it gradually vanishes into air, leaving nothing still before him but the broad level of an interminable sand! No; these are living realities on which the eye of faith, kindled and invigorated by the power of Jehovah himself, fixes an unwavering gaze; and, as we advance, and advance, and still advance, the light that shines upon them becomes stronger and stronger, and brighter and brighter, until, at last, we bask in all the sunshine and enjoy all the pleasure they reveal. A Christian's privileges!—what is there in nature to compare with

them? A Christian's privileges!—do you not deem wealth, and honor, and fame, and power, and royalty, to be reputed but as nothing compared with them? A Christian's privileges!—do they not give to him a surpassing grandeur, a halo of inconceivable splendor? A Christian's privileges!—ought they not to bestir a holy startling and kindling in every bosom, exciting a fervent and intense ambition that refuses to be satisfied until we reach the heaven in which they are consummated and crowned?

We have now contemplated the two great divisions which mark the first part of the subject, and now we proceed,

II. TO SEEK TO IMPRESS THE EXHORTATIONS WHICH OUR VIEW OF THE CHRISTIAN'S CHARACTER AND THE CHRISTIAN'S PRIVILEGES OUGHT JUSTLY AND PROPERLY TO INSPIRE.

My address is, in the

First place, *to those by whom this character is sustained.*

My Christian brethren, we exhort you, *first, to live diligently and carefully in consistency with the religion you have embraced.* I am happy in believing that multitudes who are now in the presence of God sustain the character, and have a title to those privileges we have described; let me, however, stir up your minds by way of remembrance. Christians! the eyes of many are upon you. "You are a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men!" In you the honor of religion is involved! Your inconsistencies would stain it; your consistencies will adorn it! With regard to your belief in the principles of the gospel to which we have referred, we exhort you, that in them you will be firm and unwavering; that you will not be led away by cunningly devised fables, or carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but that you will be established in the faith; that you will hold fast the form of sound words; that you will be "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." With regard to your conformity to the principles of the gospel, we exhort you, that there you will be vigilant, watchful, and exact. The state of the times in which we live, the many avenues which are constantly opened for conformity between Christians and worldlings, render necessary repeated exhortations to those that profess the name of Christ to come out and be separate, to "avoid the very appearance of evil," and by "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, adorn the doctrine of God your Savior in all things." Be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine



as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life. Let your light, my brethren, in this manner shine before men, and, while your own character is exalted, and your own enjoyments are multiplied, you will confer honor on the great cause to which you are attached, and become, in some measure, the instruments in the hands of the Almighty in propelling the march of your beloved religion over the heathen and unenlightened countries of the earth, and in constituting the religion of the Bible the religion of the world.

We exhort you, *secondly*, that you will make a *public glory of your connexion with the cause to which you are attached*. That you are Christians, ought to be publicly known before the world, and the ungodly, by your courage and fortitude for the truth, should be called to take knowledge that you are numbered among those who are chosen, and called, and faithful. For what on earth is there to render a Christian ashamed of the religion with which he is connected? There are many, indeed, in modern times, professing to be connected with the name of Christ, who, while they avow themselves to be so, do it with a timid and fearful misgiving, and there are multitudes more who avoid the avowal altogether, as if to say that they were Christians involved before the public an avowed disgrace. As a minister of the living God, knowing not a little of the crimes of the church, knowing not a little of the needs of the church, knowing not a little of the demands of the church, I would earnestly and solemnly beseech you who have felt the stirring of the grace of God in your hearts, to appear before the world without one compromise: and they will perceive what you are in your characters, and in your prospects, and in your hopes. Come out publicly from the world; unite yourselves publicly with the people and with the servants of God. Let the Christian church be your home — let the Christian church be your atmosphere — let the Christian church be your occupation. “Be not thou, therefore, — I would speak particularly to the *young* — be not thou, therefore, ashamed of the testimony of the Lord;” but in every scene of your mortal existence emulate the spirit of the great apostle of the Gentiles, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Jesus Christ my Lord!”

These days of peace, my brethren, are fallen, mean, and degenerate indeed, if the disciples of Christ are to be arrayed beneath the shadow, refusing to make known their light and principles before the world, when, in what may be called the *heroic* age of the church, martyrs, amid storms and tempests, and when they were brought to the rack, refused to bend, or compromise, or quail. We are told of one — and he is but an example — who, when brought before the tribunal of judgment from whence he was to receive the doom of death, and ask-



ed, "What is thy name?" replied, "I am a Christian." "What is thine occupation?" "I am a Christian." "What is thy native country?" "I am a Christian." "Who were thine ancestors?" "I am a Christian." And to every question his reply consisted in the words, "I am a Christian." My brethren, emulate the spirit and imitate the example! Rise superior alike to the world's reproach and scorn! Wear the badge of your religion like a diadem on your brow, openly and unconcealed! In youth, and in age; in publicity, and in retirement; in health, and in sickness; in life, and in death, be this your proclamation, I am a Christian. We observe, in the

Second place, that an address will properly be directed to those *who from this character are yet estranged*.

There are, perhaps, not a few in this congregation, who, although they have possessed the means of Christian privilege, and have often heard the language of Christian exhortation, are, nevertheless, at this very moment, without God, without Christ, and without hope in the world. Is there not a conscience, testifying that its possessor is without a title to the elements of that character which we have endeavored to describe? You, who have reason to believe you are yet unconverted, allow me to press upon you one great consideration, and that is, *the vast importance of a personal interest in that character which we have portrayed*. I cannot but believe that the plain and perspicuous statement, as I trust it has been, of what pertains to the Christian's privileges and the Christian's character, is adapted to inspire something like a desire on your part to be mingled with them. Perhaps, you feel as did Balaam, when he ascended the summit of a rock and looked down upon the tribes of Israel abiding in their tents, with the tabernacle in the midst, and the Shechinah and glory of the living God hovering over the encampment; and, after pausing first, perhaps, in observation, then in admiration, exclaimed, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! From the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him. Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" Is not the inspiration of the prophet, the inspiration of every reasonable being who has beheld a spiritual survey of the character and privileges of the sons and daughters of God.

To the view of their privileges add another consideration, which must solemnly be pressed upon you, and that is, that *without a participation in the character and privileges of the sons and daughters of God, you must be finally and eternally miserable*. Yea, my hearers, in life, you will be destitute of the only influence which can console and alleviate in death. You will have no ray of light beaming upon the darkness of

the grave, and no charm to chase away the terrors that gather thick around the entrance to eternity! In *judgment* you will have no shield to ward off the certainty of justice, and prevent the sentence of condemnation! In *eternity*, you will suffer the untold agonies of the torments of hell for ever! Do you want my warrant? "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Do you want another? "He that believeth not shall be damned." Do you want another? "The Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." O, lull not yourselves into a deceitful slumber; cry not "peace, peace," when there is no peace! Your spirits, even now, are standing upon the verge; if you look not to Christ, and believe not upon him, you will sink into the lowest hell!

My brethren, in the name of Christ, I ask those who constitute this congregation, in advancing towards the close of the subject — whether they refuse to be called by the name and to wear the character of Christians? You have heard what a Christian is — will you be a Christian, or will you not? Will you receive the truth as it is in Jesus? Will you rest upon the great Redeemer, who is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him? My hearers, will you render and avow your allegiance, that the name of Christ shall be your badge — that his example shall be your model — that his commandments shall be your rule — and that his heaven shall be your goal; or will you refuse? My hearers, the moment is now arrived, when immortal spirits are challenged as to their choice with regard to their eternal welfare. You, perhaps, may dream but little of it; but the place where we are gathered is filled with immortal spirits, who are waiting anxiously for your decision. There are angels bending from their seats, and resting on their harps, watching you with intense solicitude, till they hear the command of God, that there may be joy amongst them over sinners who are brought to repentance. There are demons rising from the abyss, fluttering to preserve the captives whom they fear may be disenthralled, maddened if you escape, rejoicing if the archfiend make the triumph, if you become tenfold more the children of hell than before. The two orders of invisible beings are amongst us, and what shall be the result of to-night? Will you give joy to angels or joy to demons? Will you kindle rapture in heaven, or will you kindle rapture in hell? Will you burst the bands that surround you asunder, and rise, and stand emancipated in the liberty wherewith Christ

makes his people free ; or will you clank your chains around you like maddened captives, and make yourselves more the children of corruption than ever ? My hearers, in the name of God, who is greater than angels and fiends, I demand your decision, and I demand your decision for Christ ! By His agony and bloody sweat ; by his cross and passion ; by his precious death and burial ; by his glorious resurrection and ascension ; by his reign at the right hand of the Father, and by his coming as the Judge of quick and dead, I demand of every one that this night he will enrol his name as a Christian ! Refuse it if you dare, and answer for it before the tribunal of God ! For myself, I take the vow once more, and I trust I shall be followed, even by thousands, who are in the presence of God, “ I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” “ I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” “ Whether I live, I will live unto the Lord ; or whether I die, I will die unto the Lord ; whether I live, therefore, or die, I am the Lord’s. For, to this end, Christ both died and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.”

Come, ye sons and daughters of men, let us thus sustain the Christian’s character, then shall we enjoy the Christian’s privileges ; and, as we possess the Christian’s privileges, we shall rise to the Christian’s heaven ! Shall we meet there ? The day will declare it ! Sinners, your blood be upon your own heads ! AMEN.

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## S E R M O N I V .

THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED.

BY REV. F. J. JOBSON.

“ I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

1 CORINTHIANS, ii. 2.

MAN, by his intellectual constitution, is capable of acquiring and possessing knowledge ; and in this he stands distinguished from all other beings in the visible universe. The earth on which you tread, covered as it is with beauty and bloom, knows not of its own existence ; it is totally unconscious of itself. The sun, that shines so gloriously, knows not of his own splendor ; he is totally unconscious of the light and life he throws on all around. The air, that sustains all animal and



vegetable life, knows not of its sustaining and refreshing qualities. Birds, that wing their adventurous way through the air ; beasts, that stalk upon the surface of the earth ; fishes, that pass down to depths unfathomed — are totally incapable of contemplating the scenes by which they are surrounded. But MAN, the last and brightest fruit of eternal wisdom — MAN, the last production of Jehovah in his six days' labor, can contemplate the glorious scenes by which he is surrounded. The brute creation seem to think of nothing but what is urged upon them by present inclinations ; the past is a blank to them, the future all in darkness. But man can review the past, contemplate the present, and look onward to the future. Nay, you know not where to put a limit to the powers of the mind of man. You may stride over the surface of this earth, and speak with certainty of its dimensions ; you may measure the distance of the most far-out planet, and, after you have ascertained its distance, you may mark out its surface, and place a boundary line beyond it ; but where will you put a limit to the powers of the mind of man ? It is ever moving onwards. It goes on link by link in the chain of understanding ; and you know not where to find an end of that chain, but at the footsteps of the Eternal Throne.

But not only is there a power in the mind of man to acquire and retain knowledge, but there is a love for knowledge, implanted by the Divine hand within his breast for important purposes. The mind of man has as great a dislike to ignorance as the eye has to darkness, or the limbs to confinement. It loves to look out on the broad light of truth ; it loves to range in the freedom of its faculties.

But various are the opinions of men, as to what constitutes the most valuable kind of knowledge. One man says, that the knowledge of languages is the most valuable of all knowledge, and he sets himself down to study the speech of various nations ; and thus he seeks reputation among men. Another man says, that the expression of sentiment in poetic numbers is the most exalted employment of the mind ; and he, as a poet, seeks reputation among his fellow beings. Another man says, that to understand well the connection between cause and effect, or to be a natural philosopher, and be able to place every created object in its proper situation — from the gigantic elephant that stalks the surface of the earth, down to the smallest insect that dances in the sun-beam — is to be a wise man ; and, as a natural philosopher, he seeks reputation among his fellow-creatures. Another, perhaps, takes off the crust of the earth, on which you tread, and looks down into it to see how it is built and composed ; and, as a geologist, he seeks reputation among men. Another, makes the earth, on which you walk, an observatory, and gazes at the stars ; and by his progress in what is called the celestial sci-

ence, he seeks reputation in the world. My friends, such knowledge may be valuable, but it is not the most valuable ; such knowledge may be important, but it is not the most important. Man is a guilty sinner ; and in this world his time should be occupied in seeking reconciliation with his God. By Christ crucified a way is opened, whereby guilty man may be reconciled to God. Then, I say, that man is the wise man, who goes to the cross of Christ to study there the great science of human redemption. Let a man be what he may — astronomer, geologist, poet, natural philosopher, or whatever else, he must yield the palm to the Christian student, who goes to the cross of Christ to study there the great science of human salvation. Do you wonder, then, to hear the apostle Paul — the noble, talented, learned Paul — avow a determination so great, as that which is expressed in the words of the text ? Do you wonder to hear him say, amidst the philosophers and sages of Greece, “ I am determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified.” Noble Paul ! valiant Paul ! He had a right to say so ; he knew that Christ crucified was everything to him as a guilty sinner. You cannot be surprised to hear him say, “ I am determined not to know any thing save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”

The persons, to whom St. Paul first avowed his determination, were persons that were given to the study of science, as it was taught by their philosophers, who were well skilled in all the tricks of human oratory. Paul went among them, and he declared simply and plainly the death of Christ, and the way of salvation for guilty man by the death of Christ ; and they frowned upon Paul ; they looked upon it as bad taste in Paul, to go among the philosophers of Greece, and speak of the death of Christ as the way of deliverance for guilty beings. But Paul challenged them to point to effects produced by their preaching, so great as those which had been produced by the simple story of the cross. “ Where,” says he, “ is the wise ? where is the scribe ? where is the disputer of this world ? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world ? ” And then he goes on to show how the effects, which had been produced among the Corinthians, had been caused — that it was not done by any tricks of human oratory, or by the gaudy addresses of an eloquent man. No ; he reminds them of the plain and simple way in which he went amongst them, and proclaimed the cross of Jesus Christ ; he says, “ And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God ; for I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”

First, then, we shall notice the grand subject, which so exclusively

engaged the apostle's attention — Jesus Christ, the Savior of man ; in the second place, we shall bring forward reasons to justify a determination so great, as that which the apostle avows in my text, so that he would “know nothing among them, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”

I. First, then, we are to notice THE GRAND SUBJECT, which so exclusively engaged the apostle's attention.

It was as much as if he had said, “I am determined to think of nothing for myself, I am determined to teach nothing to you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified ; this shall be the point, the centre, to which all the lines of my ministry shall be drawn — Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”

I suppose, my friends, it is not necessary for me to take up the time this morning, in explaining to you the meaning of these words. You are all aware, that the word *Jesus* signifies a Savior. The first who bore that name, was the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim — the successor of Moses ; for Joshua, by proper interpretation, is the same name as Jesus, and that name was given unto Joshua as a proof that God would fulfil his promise unto his people ; that he would raise up a leader, who should direct them through the wilderness, and bring them safely into a land “flowing with milk and with honey.” And you know, that the name given to the Savior — that of *Jesus* — was not given to him merely as a proper name, a name by which he might be distinguished among the sons of men — not given to him, as the name of John was given at his circumcision. No ; for when the angel appeared unto Joseph, and gave the name of *Jesus*, he gave along with it the etymology or meaning of the name ; he said, “Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.” The word *Jesus*, then, signifies a Savior.

We now come to that title which is generally annexed to that of *Jesus* — that of *Christ*, which signifies the *anointed*. Under the old dispensation, kings and priests were anointed — set apart for their office. You remember, that David was anointed to be king by Samuel, and Aaron and his sons were anointed to the priesthood. Oil was poured upon their heads. Nor was this a mere formal or unmeaning ceremony ; but, connected with it, was the bestowment of fit qualifications for their office. Until David had been anointed by Samuel, he was a raw shepherd, quite unfit to reign over Israel ; but when Samuel had anointed him, the Spirit of God came upon him, and prepared him for the office. Now Christ was anointed. I do not mean that it was mere oil — a mere drug pressed out of vegetable matter — that was poured



upon him. No ; it was the unction of the Holy One. You remember, that at his baptism the Holy Ghost descended upon him, and a voice from heaven was heard, " This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; " and then he went into the temple, and he cried, " The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor ; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised."

But, my friends, it is not upon the name of *Jesus* that we rest our hopes for salvation, nor is it upon the *anointing* of the Savior that we rest our hopes for salvation ; no, it was not the anointing of Christ nor the name of Christ upon which the apostle Paul determined to dwell — but *Jesus Christ crucified*. And that is every thing to you and to me, as guilty sinners. That is the foundation of all your hopes ; that is the ground of all your expectations ; that is the key-stone of the whole arch of Christianity. If you take that away, there is nothing for us to hope for, nothing left on which we can ground our expectations of eternal salvation. *Jesus Christ crucified* is every thing to you and to me.

Let us attend to this mighty subject — this subject, which, on account of its magnificence, has been justly called " the wisdom of God " — this subject, which, on account of its grandeur, excites the admiration of the loftiest intelligences. You never find, in this book, that angels are walking the surface of this earth to inquire into the connection between cause and effect in its transactions ; but you *do* find them Christian students — the angels are represented by Peter as desiring to fathom the mysteries of redemption. This is the subject which will engage *our* attention throughout all eternity, if you and I shall get to heaven, and furnish us with songs long as eternity shall endure.

Let us, then, look at *Jesus Christ crucified* — *Jesus Christ* your Savior — *Jesus Christ* my Savior — *Jesus Christ* crucified for the sins of the whole world — not *Jesus Christ*, a good man going up and down this world, performing his heavenly Master's will — not *Jesus Christ*, a great prophet commissioned by God to convey some important information to the inhabitants of this world. No ; to view him as a good man, his greatest enemies are willing — to view him as a great prophet, his greatest enemies are willing. My friends, there is a system in our day, which seeks to pluck the crown of underived glory from the head of the Savior, to wrest the sceptre from his hand, to take the robe of royalty from his shoulders, and to reduce him to the level of a man. There are some who bow to Christ as a good man and a great prophet, but who scorn to look upon him as the co-equal Son of God. No won-

der that the doctrine should be attacked, and maliciously attacked ; but that men, who pretend to bow to the authority of this book, should deny it — is indeed inconsistent ; and we do not believe the atheist is a more inconsistent man, than men who pretend to revere the authority of the Bible, and deny the Divinity of Christ.

We will just look at this point ; for you know that the Divinity of Jesus Christ is every thing to you and to me. I will just refer you to two or three arguments founded on the word of God.

I will first refer you to an interesting conversation, that took place between Jesus Christ and the Jews, in the days of his flesh. They said, “ Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham ? ” Jesus said unto them, “ Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am ” — thus claiming for himself that name, which signifies un-derived or unborrowed existence — that name, by which Jehovah revealed himself when he sent Moses forth with a message to the children of Israel, for he said, “ I AM hath sent thee unto them ; ” this name Christ claimed himself. I next refer you to the prayer of Christ — that prayer, which he offered unto the Father before he ascended up on high ; “ Father,” says he, “ glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” Now what mortal is there that dare stand up and pray in this way ? What man is there in this assembly — good man or good woman, as he or she may be — that dare stand up, and say, “ Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was ? ”

Not only are the names of God ascribed to Christ, but the work of God, you will find in this book, is ascribed to Christ. Perhaps you will remember the fine annunciation with which the apostle John opens his gospel. He says, “ In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God ; the same was in the beginning with God ; all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” So that whatever the Divine Father and the Divine Spirit have been engaged in, the Divine Son has also been engaged in. The Divine Father and the Divine Spirit were employed in bringing into existence this world of ours, and all the glorious worlds that roll around us throughout all space ; but whatever the Divine Father and the Divine Spirit have been employed in, the Divine Son has also been employed in. The Divine Father and the Divine Spirit have been engaged, throughout eternity, in bringing into existence beings of intelligence and beings of responsibility ; but whatever the Divine Father and the Divine Spirit have been engaged in, the Divine Son has been engaged in also. “ By him were all things created, that are in

heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers ; and he was before all things, and by him all things consist."

You remember, too, that when Christ was upon the earth, He received worship. In that hour when the doubts of Thomas were dispersed, he addressed the Savior—"My Lord," said he, "and my God ;" and Christ did not reprove him for that conduct. And you will find, that many times the Savior took worship to himself. Now the loftiest created intelligence is not allowed to take worship. You remember that, when John would have fallen down to worship before the feet of an angel, he said, "See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant ; worship God." But Christ received worship, why ? He was God, and he knew that it was his right.

If you search the Old Testament Scriptures, you will find proofs of the Divinity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Isaiah calls him, "The mighty God, the everlasting Father ;" or, as it might be read, "the Father of eternity." Jeremiah calls him "the Lord" (or, as it might be read, "Jehovah") "our righteousness."

You remember, too, the attitude in which Christ stood, and the tone of voice with which he spoke, when he performed miracles. When Christ performed miracles, he did not act as Moses or Elijah did when they performed miracles, who prayed that God would help them and be with them, before they wrought the miracle. No ; he spoke with the voice of one having authority ; he spoke, and the winds ceased, and the waves were still, hushed as a child in its cradle by its mother ; it was the God of nature that spoke, and therefore all was quiet. But there is one part of our Lord's conduct, which, to my mind, proves more than volumes in regard to his Divinity ; and that is his conduct to his disciples, when he gave them their commission before he ascended up on high. "He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Now I ask, what man could breathe the Holy Ghost, the essence of God ? what human being could breathe the Holy Ghost ?

Here, then, the foundation is good, Christ is God : and if he be God, then I can rest upon him, because I know he made atonement for the sins of the world. But if you take away the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, there is nothing left for me to rest upon. Why, suppose I were to take the best man in all this book, and set him before you, and dress him up in all his virtues, and say, "By this man is preached unto you salvation ;" which of you could rest your salvation upon him ? No ; Milton, in his beautiful book, over which we hang with delight, hour after hour, represents God as looking round



among the angels of heaven, and asking which of them would go and deliver man. That may do for Milton, it may do for poetry; but it will not do for our soul's foundation. The brightest archangel that burns before the eternal throne, would not have done to make atonement for the sins of man. Infinite justice must be satisfied; an infinite nature must effect that work; in the whole round of beings, there is but one that is infinite; and unless Christ had undertaken our cause, you and I must have been lost for ever. But, blessed be his name! He undertook our cause; he came down into this world, and suffered, and bled for you and for me. With the might of his Divinity, he entered our humanity; and, by the one offering of himself, he made a full, perfect, and sufficient atonement for the sins of the world. Human nature was necessary, in order to make that atoning sacrifice; and I know it is a mystery, how God and man could be united in one nature; but why should I reject a truth that is revealed, because it is a mystery? I cannot comprehend *myself*; I know that I can turn to the right, or turn to the left, or stretch out my arm, by the mere exertion of my will — but I cannot understand it. And if I cannot understand myself, why should I reject this doctrine because I cannot comprehend it. My friends, there are heights in religion, as there are mountains in nature, which the foot of man never trod; and if the eagle, in his magnificent flight, shall bring down from those mountains the leaves of a tree which I have never seen, shall I doubt the existence of the tree, merely because I have not ascended to the spot where it grows? And since I cannot comprehend how God and man can be united in one nature, I will throw myself before the feet of Christ, and I will worship him, and cry to every sinner that shall come within the sound of my voice, “Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.” Christ has undertaken your cause and my cause. He suffered in our stead.

I have not time this morning to dwell upon the sufferings of the Savior. And if I had, I would not dwell upon his corporeal sufferings; I would not speak of those things which are being dwelt upon for hours, and set forth as if they were the most important; I would not speak of the insults in the judgment hall; I would not speak of him hurried through the streets, and of the people proclaiming all the way that they had found out the cheat and the hypocrite, and that his own confession convicted him of blasphemy, and condemned him to die; I would not speak of their plaiting a crown of thorns, and putting it round his head, and with their fists striking the sharp edges into his temples; I would not tell how with their whips they smote his back, till it became one bloody wound; I would not speak of his



being nailed to the cross, his body pulled to its full length and breadth, and pierced by the nails that fastened it; I would not speak of the multitude that wagged their heads in scorn, and said, "He saved others, himself he cannot save." No, if 'I had time to dwell, I would dwell upon the weight of Divine wrath, that descended upon him and crushed him, in the hour of the world's atonement. I would go to that. Why? Because my Savior went to it. He often spoke of that hour; and there seemed to be something brooding upon his mind, in reference to that awful hour, throughout his life. He spoke of it to his disciples often. He spoke of it on the mount of transfiguration; there it is said, "He spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." Oh! what an hour was that! At that awful hour, the whole universe bent an eager aspect towards him, angels gazed upon him with breathless silence, devils leagued their forces to uphold their empire. That was the most interesting hour the world ever knew. If Christ had then quitted our cause, you and I had perished for ever; but, adored be our Savior! He did not quit our cause. No, he longed for the garments dyed in blood; he said, "How am I straitened, till that baptism be accomplished;" he trod with unwavering step that path of difficulty; he buffeted with that hour, and at the close of it he shouted, with a voice that shook hell to its centre, reverberated through the universe, and filled all heaven with gladness, "It is finished." Oh! go, my fellow-sinner, go to the cross. Stand by the cross. Here is the ransom-price for thy soul. Here is atonement made for thy sins. Go to the cross, and cry, with the apostle, "I am determined not to know any thing, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

Oh! what is there so noble, so sublime, so majestic, as the crucifixion of our Lord? Oh! be *Christians*, be *Christians*. Men may talk about deeds of human enterprise and human chivalry; they may speak of the senate-house, where the passing of an act of Parliament has decided the interests of millions in a single moment; they may tell of the battle-field, where hundreds have stood for hours up to the ancles in human blood; they may speak of the accession of a temporal prince, or a temporal princess, where thousands have been fixed in immovable gaze at the pomp of majesty. But *we* will go to the cross; we will stand by the cross; we will gaze upon the Savior; and we will cry, "I determine not to know any thing, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Oh! I wish this morning I might be the humble instrument, in God's hand, of giving you, or getting you, more love to Christ. Oh! go to the cross; love your Savior, adore your Savior, admire your

Savior. I tell you, it will afford the richest enjoyment. You will sing with the poet —

“ Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,  
Which before the cross I spend;  
Life, and health, and peace possessing,  
From the sinner's dying Friend.  
Here I'll sit for ever viewing  
Mercy's streams in streams of blood!  
Precious drops, my soul bedewing,  
Plead and claim my peace with God.”

Oh go to the cross, then; and say, with the apostle Paul, “I am determined not to know any thing, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”

II. But we promised to bring forward, in the second place, SOME REASONS to justify a determination so great, as that which is avowed in the words of my text. The apostle said, “he was determined not to know any thing, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”

I have already informed you of the occasion of these words, and spoken to you of Paul going amidst the philosophers and sages of Greece, and telling them the simple tale of Christ crucified, and how they despised him. But Paul was far above being turned from his work by them. And why?

1. He knew that it did not want the power of human eloquence to set forth this truth. No; what would you say to me, if I were to light a taper at mid-day to show you the meridian sun? what would you say to me, if I were to take you to a small pool, and say, Look there, you see what the ocean is? what would you say to me, if I were to take you out to some of the richest scenery that this world would afford, and, after I had shown it you, give you a piece of colored glass, and say, Look at that scene, through this piece of colored glass? Why, you would say, let the sun shine in its own glory, let the ocean flow in its own expanse, let nature be shown in her own robes. And let the gospel be seen in its own power. Paul knew that it did not need any power of human eloquence to set it forth. No; it was “the wisdom of God,” and it needed the power of God, and nothing else, to set it forth. And, therefore, he said, “I am determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”

2. There is another reason for bringing this forward — another reason to justify St. Paul, and to lead you to the foot of the cross; and it is this — *the knowledge of Christ crucified is certain knowledge*; and in this it is distinguished from all other kinds of knowledge. This declaration would have applied in the days of the apostle; for you remember the mythology of the ancients; you remember that Greece,

in the height of her intellectual power, had thirty thousand gods, and they were conflicting in their temples day after day, where Paul was, as to what was the right object of worship ; but Paul knew that Christ the Savior was the right object of worship, and on account of the certainty of this knowledge, he had a right to determine, and he did "determine not to know any thing, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." And there is a great deal of uncertainty in our day in all sciences. Take the knowledge of anatomy, for instance ; a man may tell me how my body is composed, my bones, and flesh, and blood, but he cannot tell me how will acts upon motion — how it is that I can, when I like, move my foot, or move my hand. Take astronomy ; a man may tell me how far a planet is off, but he cannot tell me whether it is inhabited. Take chemistry ; why, you may torture nature with your fires, but she will not divulge her secrets. No ; it is still as then, that there is a great deal of ignorance. Athens was in ignorance ; she had erected an altar to "the unknown God," and it was only Paul that could stand up and say, "Him declare I unto you." Paul had tried for himself, he knew for himself, and therefore he had a right to exclaim, "I am determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

I would stay a moment here, and I would have you try, each and all for yourselves, the certainty of this knowledge. You may talk about evidence of other sorts ; you may talk about historical evidence, and you may talk about internal evidence ; but it is only experimental evidence that can satisfy the mind. Now I will suppose a familiar illustration, to make this clear to you all. Supposing that one of you sent your servant to a shop for something ; say for a bottle of ink ; well, the girl comes back, and you ask her what she has got ; "Why !" she says, "I asked the shopman for ink, and he has given me ink, here it is, here is the bottle" — that is historical evidence, the testimony of others to a fact ; but you are not quite satisfied ; you open the bottle, and you look at the ink, and find it is black, and it smells like ink — that is internal evidence ; but still you are not satisfied ; you take your pen and dip it into the bottle, and you write, and you know it is ink, because you have written with it. Now suppose a neighbor should come in, and should say, "The shopman has deceived you, or your servant has deceived you — it is not ink." What would you do ? Would you send for the servant, and question her about what the shopman said to her ? No, you would say, It is ink ; I know it is because I have tried it. And so a man may talk about the evidence arising from Jesus Christ being a good man, and such a character as this world never saw besides ; but Paul had rested upon the Savior ; he

knew for himself that he was a Savior, and, therefore, amidst the philosophers of Greece and Rome he cried, "I determined not to know any thing, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

3. If you ask me for another reason, then I say, *that the knowledge of Christ crucified is suited to you as guilty sinners.* Much of the interest of any thing, you know, depends upon its suitability. Take an illustration or two. Go to the man, who is living this day in the midst of his family, in all the comforts of his home, and say to him, You may enjoy the blessings of home; why, the man sees that there is nothing in that communication — nothing in that knowledge — that is at all suited to him, for he was already enjoying the comforts of his house; but go to the soldier, who is wearied by a long and arduous campaign, whose ears have been deafened many a time by the cannon roar, who is sighing for the quiet shadow of the village trees, under whose broad foliage he reclined and sung in days of youthful innocence — tell *him* that peace is proclaimed, the warfare accomplished, he may go home — why, he smiles, he dances for joy, he thanks you — because there is something in your information suited to his taste. Go to the man who is walking through your streets, and say to him, You may enjoy the comforts of freedom — the man returns you no thanks; there is nothing in that information suited to him; but go to the captive, whose clothes are wet with the damp of the dungeon, and his cheek marked by the flow of his tears, and see how *his* eyes sparkle with delight, when you tell him that the dungeon door is open, and he may go free. And so it is with the sinner. If I come to you and tell you of a Savior, and you are shut up in carnal security, fancying yourselves good enough, and going to heaven, there is nothing in the information suited to you; and if you are trembling because of your sins, then I bring you good news. I tell you this morning, Christ was crucified for you and for me; and therefore you ought to say and avow, with the apostle, "I am determined not to know any thing, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

4. There is another reason — *it is extensive knowledge.* He, who knows Christ, knows almost every thing else besides. This knowledge has not only light in itself, but it throws light on all other things. He, that knows Christ, knows the evil nature of sin in a better way than any other man does. Where will you go, to show me the evil nature of sin? Why, perhaps, some of you would show me a poor drunkard, that is to be found (and sorry am I to see that there are so many in this large town) reeling through the streets, perhaps on the Sabbath-day, with swollen eyes, an aching head, and (I fear) a troubled heart; you would say, Look at that man, his home has become a dungeon of



discontent, his wife sighs whenever she sees him, his children wear patched and tattered clothes, and soon the devil will take him, we fear — look at that man, and see the evil of sin! I look at that man, but I do not stop there. Where would others of you take me? you would take me to the murderer's cell, and say to me that he is going to expiate his offence against his country's laws, and you would tell me to look at him in his extremity, and see the evil of sin; I look at that man, but I do not stop there. Where would you go? Perhaps you would take me to the mouth of hell; you would blow aside its liquid flames, and bid me listen to the groanings and howlings of the damned in the pit of despair, and you would say, There see the evil nature of sin; I would go with you, but I do not stay there. I go to Calvary; I gaze upon my Savior; I remember, that that is God and man united, and hung upon the cross; and I say, how great must be sin's evil nature, since none but God incarnate could make atonement for the sins of mankind.

He who knows Christ crucified, knows the goodness of God in its richest form. Where will you go, to show me the most striking pictures of the goodness of God? Some of you, fathers, would take me, perhaps, to your habitations, and point me to your children smiling around you in health and happiness, and say, See there a proof of the goodness of God! I go with you to your habitations, but I do not stop there. Where would you go for a proof of the goodness of God? Perhaps some of you would take me to the corn-fields, and show me the gold ears waving in the breeze, and, as you pointed to them, say, See, there is food for man and food for beast, there is a proof of the goodness of God. I go with you to the corn-fields, but I do not stop there. Perhaps some of you would take me to some vale that was by, and show me a nest having in it a few little unfledged birds, with nothing above it but the broad sky, and the open air about it, and they are poor, weak, and helpless creatures, and must be starved to death unless they have food in a few hours, and you would remind me of God having sent forth his messengers to collect it for them, and you would say, See, there is a proof of the goodness of God. I go with you to that vale and that nest, but I do not stop there. I go to Calvary, and I see there the greatest picture of God's love to man, for I see Jesus hanging upon the cross. I see there the best proof of God's love to man as a guilty sinner, and, with a sight of the cross, I cry, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

He who knows Christ crucified, knows history in its best form, much better than the mere historian, who is to be found with his midnight

lamp over musty volumes of ancient times. He looks at the call of Abraham, and the passage of the Israelites through the wilderness, and he shows how God was preparing the way for the establishment of Christianity in the world. He knows not only the history of the past, but he can tell the history of the future. Why, philosophy walks your churchyards, and asks, "If a man die, shall he live again?" but there is no answer to the question. Reason has sent out her sons, in all ages and in all directions, to look for the rays of immortality, that are said to be darting across the path of man's existence; but they return disheartened and unsuccessful. It is true, that there were some few, of giant intellect, that expressed their hopes of another state of existence, but what they spoke of at one time, they doubted at another. Socrates and Plato at one time spoke as from the brightness of heaven, and at another as from the darkness of the tomb. It was all uncertainty; there is a veil, and the hand of philosophy can never draw it aside. But the gospel has caused the light to shine upon that veil, and it has become transparent, and you may see, on the other side of that veil, the form of departed friends; you may see Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham, you may see Dives in hell, lifting up his eyes, being in torments, and hear him cry, "I am tormented in this flame." O yes, while man knows nothing of the future, and sees the earth heaved above its proper level, and knows that the bodies of the dead are there confined, yet cannot answer the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" — the Christian can. He knows that Christ "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body;" and if you ask, How can it be done? — we take up the words of the apostle, and say, "According to the mighty working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

On account of its extent, then, take up the words of the text and say, "I am determined not to know any thing save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

5. If I had time, I would go on to show that it is *sanctified knowledge* — it is purifying. It is not a knowledge that regards the outer man, and says that if he will attend to this and that, to which he is averse, and avoid this and that to which he is prone, he shall become a well-behaved and orderly man in society. Alas! for such knowledge. It is never said in my Bible, that a man has a *head* "of unbelief in departing from the living God;" but it is written in my Bible, that man has an "evil *heart* of unbelief in departing from the living God." This knowledge (I mean, experimental knowledge) passes through every vein where sin has passed; it neutralizes the stream as

it passes; it goes down to the fountain, and it purifies the fountain. It requires a man to "come out from the world, and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing."

Oh! then, look at the characteristics of this knowledge—the knowledge of Christ crucified—and say if you will not go to the cross this morning and cry with the apostle, "I am determined not to know any thing, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Oh! again I say, I wish you would love your Savior. If you came to me, and told me you were a Christian, I would ask you how much you loved your Savior; and, in proportion as you loved your Savior, I know the Word of God would stand with me, when I declared that in that proportion you were a Christian. I love to read the prophecies of this book; the prophets seem to have gone over the surface of creation, and sought the most lovely images to set forth the Savior; they call him a "Sun," and they call him a "Shield," and a "Star," and a "Tree;" oh! but—

"Nor earth, nor seas, nor sun, nor stars,  
Nor heav'n his full resemblance bears;  
His beauties you can never trace,  
Till you behold him face to face."

Oh! love your Savior. Remember he loved you. Remember he was not fastened to the cross by spikes or nails; if Christ my Savior had never been fastened to the cross by any thing but spikes or nails, he would never have been fastened to it at all. It was his love that led him there; it was his love that bound him there. Oh, you are ready to cry this morning, let nature speak with her ten thousand tongues:

"Oh! for this love let rocks and hills  
Their lasting silence break,  
And all harmonious human tongues  
The Savior's praises speak."

I wish I had this morning one moment of poetic inspiration to give vent to the zeal, with which my bosom burns. I wish I had this morning a voice of thunder, that it might be borne across the breezes of the mighty ocean; I would cry to every sinner in this world to come forth, and avow the determination of St. Paul, and say, "I am determined not to know any thing, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." This shall be the theme of my discourse as long as God will give me breath, while I stand in the midst of sinners. Woe be to the minister, who weaves garlands of flowers to please his people; the Lord help us to preach Christ; the Lord help us to cry to this wicked, this apostate town, "I am determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

O, thou guilty sinner, I cannot leave thee. I again tell thee, the

way is open to the cross. Go to the cross. Thou hast heard he is a Savior; he can save to the uttermost; lay hold of that Savior. What is faith in Christ? It is a reliance upon Christ, a firm reliance upon your Savior. It is like a man ready to drown — throw him a shilling rope and a thousand pounds bank note — which would he choose? We have heard of some who have preferred this world to Christ; but throw a drowning man a shilling rope and a thousand pounds; will he argue, “Oh! I wonder if this rope be strong enough, I wonder if it is twisted the right way?” no, the man says, “I am drowning, and unless I get hold of the rope, I shall be lost.” So it is with thee, my poor fellow-sinner. I have not many moments to speak to thee, and therefore I show thee a plain illustration; I tell thee, thou must, by the hand of faith, get hold of the Savior, and cling to the Savior, and then, sure as God’s Word, thy debt is paid, thy soul is saved and thou art justified. I tell you, there is a way to the cross; I tell you there are blessings clustered in the cross; I tell you there is a Savior hanging on that cross; and what is his language? “Look unto me” — “look unto me” — “look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth.” “Oh! but,” says the sinner, “you do not know my case; I was the child of pious parents; when upon earth they prayed with me, and laid their hands upon my head, and cried to God to save me; but their hoary heads are in the grave; they are dead and gone to God, and I am not saved; do you think there is salvation for me?” I tell you there is — there is mercy for you. Jesus is “able to save to the uttermost.” Christ crucified can bring you into the peace and favor of God in this world, and take you to reign with God for ever.

Now I will just give you a specimen — a sample of God’s ability to save. You have looked at the cross, and you have looked at the Savior; now look at one side of the cross, and see what is there. There is another being crucified with the Savior; look at him, a poor wretch, who is deemed unfit for this world, who has been taunting the Savior, and saying to him, “If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us.” But see; Jesus has turned and looked upon him, and that sight has broken his heart, and *he* has looked at Christ with the eye of faith, and through the prickly thorns streaming with blood, and he has said, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.” Can he save him? can he save him? Will he save him? will he save him? Here is a poor wretch, perhaps, who never prayed in his life before, and just as his tongue is cleaving to the roof of his mouth in the agonies of dissolution, and his life-blood is gurgling from his hands and feet, he cries, “Lord, remember me.”



Will he save him? What does he say? He said nothing to the multitudes that were shouting around the cross; he said nothing to the scoffs of the scorner; no, the scoffs of the scorner he noticed not, the shouts of the multitude he regarded not. But here is a penitent whispering in his ear the cry for mercy, and that he hears, and he says, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with me in paradise." And that day, before six o'clock at night, Christ took the spirit of the thief up to heaven; and it is there this morning, as a sample of God's ability to save. Oh! go to thy Savior, gaze upon thy Savior. While you see him taking the spirit of the thief up to paradise with him, say, on account of his love, on account of his mercy, "I am determined not to know any thing, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

The Lord add his blessing, and save you all — save you in this life — save you in death, and save you for ever. For, blessed be God, there is an eternal home with him; and if you once put your feet within the threshold of heaven's gate, you may go to its pearly battlements and cry, "Farewell, tempting devil! farewell, sin and sorrow, I am far from the world, and far from your reach." Lord! save us all for evermore in Christ.

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## SERMON V.

CHRIST'S CHURCH.

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 BY REV. T. RAFFLES, D. D., L. L. D.  
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"And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—MATTHEW xvi. 18.

PERHAPS there is no passage of Holy Scripture that has furnished more abundant materials for controversy than this. There are no less than six modes, for instance, of interpreting the word "rock;" and each of these modes of interpretation can boast its great name, and claim for its sanction some acknowledged masters in Israel; whilst the nature and constitution of the "Church," which our Lord declares he "will build upon that rock," has been, from time immemorial, and is at this present moment, matter of furious controversy and warm debate. With this controversy, however, we purpose not to intermeddle; we have neither time nor inclination for this; but we shall simply endeav-

or, by Divine help, to give you a plain and practical, and, I trust, intelligent exposition of the passage.

With the occasion of it, you are, doubtless, perfectly familiar. When our Lord "came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi," the sacred historian tells us he began to inquire of his disciples what were the opinions which men entertained and expressed concerning him. The general impression is, that he went thither for the sake of retirement and instructive conversation with his disciples; but whatever might have been his immediate motive, he certainly did most effectually improve his residence there for that purpose. He opened the conversation, which he there held with them, by the important question, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" What is the general opinion which men entertain and express concerning me?

Many propose a similar question concerning themselves from motives of vanity and of overweening self-conceit, in the hope of hearing in reply something that will minister to their pride, and prove as grateful incense offered at the shrine of their self-esteem. But of such a motive as this, the Redeemer was incapable; and the question he thus proposed to the disciples, was for their sakes, rather than his own,—that from their answer he might take occasion more aptly and impressively to "expound to them the things concerning himself:" his mysterious nature, his mediatorial character, and his spiritual kingdom.

And then they told him—"Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets;" for there was a controversy respecting him at that day, as well as now. Some regarded him as an impostor and a deceiver of the people; some said, "He hath a devil, and is mad," and marvelled that such multitudes should flock to hear him; some even dared to affirm that he was in league with the powers of darkness, and wrought his stupendous miracles by Satanic agency.

And this appears to me to be that very "sin against the Holy Ghost" which shall never be forgiven, "neither in this world, nor in that which is to come"—to ascribe to infernal influence those mighty works which he wrought by the immediate agency of the Spirit of God; for immediately after the utterance of this blasphemy, "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils," our Lord pronounced these tremendous words, "Verily, I say unto you, all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation;" and it is added—"Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit."

But among those who entertained better opinions, a general impression was, that he was John the Baptist, or one of the ancient prophets risen from the dead. And when they thus told him the various opinions men entertained respecting him, he added, "But whom say *ye* that I am?" What is your opinion? And Peter, always prompt, ever ardent, instantly responded, "Thou art the Christ" — the Messiah, the Anointed — "the Son of the living God." Now it was in reply to Peter, and as suggested by his answer, that our Lord gave utterance to the memorable announcement of the text: "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

There are two things, to which our attention is demanded in the text; first, the edifice of which the Redeemer speaks — the "Church," and, secondly, the relation in which he himself stands to that edifice: "my Church." "Upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

I. First, the edifice of which the Redeemer speaks — the Church — "my Church." What does he mean by his Church?

Not any material building, of whatever form or dimensions, however costly the materials of which it is composed, however approved the style of architecture in which it is constructed, however vast the proportions by which it is distinguished, however exquisite the skill with which it is wrought, however gorgeous the ceremonial, however appropriate the rites by which it is consecrated. Though there may be the long-drawn aisle, and the fretted vault, and the pealing anthem, and the measured chant — all this does not constitute a church, according to the New Testament acceptance of the term, nor, assuredly, in the sense in which our Lord is to be understood in the passage before us. Nor are we to understand by it any building of humbler kind, or of worse materials, or of inferior workmanship.

No mere collection of material things, then, whether stone, or clay, or wood, is a church, in the scriptural acceptance of the word. Custom has, indeed, so applied the term to such edifices, that there are multitudes who affix to it no other idea; but not a solitary instance of such an application of the term occurs in the whole compass of the sacred volume. But very few passages will suffice to show, that where the word "church" is used, whether by Christ or by his apostles, persons, and not things, are intended by it. Thus, in that well-known passage, which has been so notoriously perverted from its right meaning, referring to the exercise of Christian discipline, our Lord says — "If he" — that is, the offending brother — "if he will not

hear thee," when thou hast told his fault in the presence of one or two others, (taken with him as witnesses by the offended party,) then "tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." To suppose that our Lord meant, in this case, any material edifice, such as a chapel or a church, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, were, you know, an utter absurdity; for, then must bricks and stones be endowed with intelligence, and have ears to hear, and tongues to speak.

But if by the word "church" persons are meant, the question is, who are the persons that thus compose the church, and under what circumstances do they so compose it? The literal meaning of the word "church" is *an assembly*; but every assembly is not a church. The tumultuous mob gathered together in the streets of Ephesus, of which we read in the Acts, and of whom it is said, the greater part knew not wherefore they were congregated—that is termed an assembly, and the word translated "church" is employed to express it; but that is not a church.

The circumstances under which persons constitute a church, are twofold. To express the first, I will use the language employed by one of the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England—for I cannot find language, to my apprehension, better fitted for the purpose: "A church," saith the article, "is a congregation of faithful men," (mark you that,) "in which congregation the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered, according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things which are requisite unto the same." This is the first sense in which the word "church" is to be understood. Every assembly of professing Christians, associated or convened for the purposes of religious worship, the celebration of the divine ordinances, the maintenance or administration of Christian discipline, or the enjoyment of Christian communion, in any of its acts or forms, in one place, is a church. The external circumstances, under which such an association or society exists, may be various, but they in no wise, and in no degree affect its essential character. It may be large, or it may be small; it may be rich, or it may be poor; it may be learned, or it may be illiterate; there may be many such societies, or more than one, or only one, in a village, in a hamlet, in a town, in a city, in a district, but each and every one, as the case may be, is a church. The Church at Jerusalem was so large that three thousand were added to it in a single day; whilst we read in the New Testament of churches so small that they could meet in a private house. Such a church there was in the house of Priscilla and Aquila, and in the house of Nymphas; whilst, when more churches than one existed in a district, we do not find that



they were reckoned as one church, and called *the* church of that district or country, as the Church of Judea, the Church of Asia, the Church of Macedonia, but each maintained its distinctive and individual character; and they were designated accordingly, the churches of Judea, the churches of Asia, the churches of Macedonia. And thus, though they were associated in the bonds of fraternal affection, and recognized each other as the churches of Christ, and delighted to enjoy communion with each other — as such being all in one — each maintained an independence of the rest, and administered, with unfettered freedom, its own affairs, presenting a lovely example of independence and of union —

“Distinct, as the billows; but one as the sea.”

The other sense in which the word “church” is used, is that which embraces all the true and genuine believers in Christ, of every age and of every dispensation, of every color and of every clime, of every country and of every region, from the beginning to the end of time, whether in visible connexion with any portion, or section, or society, or denomination of professing Christians, or not. This is the true, spiritual, universal, catholic Church; the spiritual body of Christ, of which every believer is a living member; the true vine, of which every believer is a living branch; the spiritual building, in which every believer is a living stone; “the general assembly and church of the first-born, written in heaven.”

Brethren, here let us pause; and ere we pass to the second article of our discourse, let us gaze upon this wondrous edifice, as it rises through successive ages to its completion. What goodly stones compose it! — countless myriads of ransomed and regenerated men. What mingling colors adorn it! — from the purest white of Europe, to the deepest jet of Africa. How does every grade of civilized or barbarous life, every age of the world, and every dispensation of the Church furnish its due proportion of materials for the glorious edifice! — from the burning Asiatic to the shivering Esquimaux — from the turbaned sultan to the tattooed savage — from the monarch on his throne, to the negro in his chains. There is the Jew, no more a devotee to rites and ceremonies, that have long since passed away; and there is the Pagan, now happily emancipated from the cruel superstitions by which he and his fathers have been so long enslaved; “the goodly fellowship of the prophets,” and “the noble army of martyrs,” shine conspicuous there; and there are all that love the Savior, and that bear his image, and that taste his grace, whatever the name by which they may be known, or whether known by no name at all. The Episcopalian is there, with the Presbyterian; the Wesleyan is there, with the Luther-

an; the Independent is there, with the Baptist; each rejoicing to recognize his essential union with all the rest, and each regretting that they were ever otherwise than one. And each, according to his capacity, contributes to the perfect symmetry, the exquisite beauty, the imperishable glory, the surpassing loveliness of this most august and stately temple of the living God. That is his church, which he "will build upon the rock, and against which the gates of hell shall not prevail."

II. We now proceed, in the second place, to consider the relation in which Jesus Christ stands to this edifice. "Upon this rock," he says, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

1. In the first place, Jesus Christ is its foundation. It is built on him. "On this rock I will build my church." Some say, that by "this rock," he meant Peter; for that he says, "Thou art Peter" — alluding to the meaning of his name — "and on this rock" — that is, on thee, Peter — "I will build my church." But then he should have said — (I speak it with all reverence; I am constrained so to speak, for the argument requires it; I speak with reverence) — but then he should have said, if such had been his meaning, "Thou art Peter; and thy nature, or thine office, or the place that I will assign to thee, or the honor that I will confer upon thee, in connexion with my church, corresponds with the meaning of thy name; for as thy name signifies a rock or a stone, and a rock or a stone is the best foundation, so upon thee, Peter, as on an immovable rock, I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." But did he say this? No, nor anything like it. For what was there in Peter to justify it? Was he omnipotent? See him sinking amidst the waves, and hear him cry, "Lord, save, or I perish." Was he infallible? Listen to his Master's sharp reproof, addressed to him almost immediately after this very conversation: "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Was he perfect? Alas! for him; for he denied his Lord, and notwithstanding his solemn pledge, that he would die with him rather than deny him, ere the cock that morning crew, he had set the seal of an oath to the thrice repeated declaration — "I know not the man." Is it on such an one as Peter, then, that Christ will build his church? Nay, if on any being inferior to himself he will build his church, it must be on Gabriel, the strongest, or on Michael, the fairest of the archangels that bow before the eternal throne. But neither are they either of them fit to be the foundation of the Christian Church; for though they

“excel in strength,” they are not omnipotent; and nothing less than omnipotence will suffice to bear up the mighty edifice, rising through successive ages in majesty and beauty, or secure its stability against the furious and combined and reiterated attacks of earth and of hell.

So it is not Peter that he means, when he says, “On this rock I will build my church,” but it is himself; it is not to Peter that he refers, but to his own Messiahship — that great fact which Peter’s testimony had embraced, which “flesh and blood had not revealed” to him, “which none of the princes of this world knew” — for “no man can thus call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” — the anointed one, the desire of all nations, the hope and expectation of Israel; “on this rock” — on myself, on my own mysterious person, on my mediatorial character, on my work, on my obedience unto death, as the exclusive ground of hope for a perishing world; on myself, the only foundation which God has laid, and beside which there is, there can be no other — “on this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Let us hear no more of creeds and canons and confessions of uninspired and therefore fallible man; let us hear no more of councils and convocations, and fathers and founders of the Christian Church; let us hear no more of names and authorities, of popes and patriarchs, of Peter and of Paul, of Luther and of Calvin, of Wesley and of Whitfield, as the foundations of the church. Away with all this Popery of Protestantism. For who is Peter, and who is Paul, and who is Luther, and who is Calvin, and who is Wesley, and who is Whitfield, but servants, ministers, instruments, by whom the great Architect condescends to build? But the foundation, and the head, and the chief corner stone, and the top-stone of the building, is Christ; and the Church is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself” — and Jesus Christ alone — “being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

2. Secondly, as Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Church, so is he its architect; “on this Rock,” he says, “I will build my Church.” but he builds rather as a master-builder, than as a workman, though it is by virtue of influence derived from him that the workmen he employs are fitted for their work, and rendered efficient operatives in the performance of it.

(1.) As the architect of it, then, he selected its site. He had the range of the universe where to choose, and he fixed on our earth as the favored spot on which he would display the wonders of redemption,

and rear, through a long succession of ages, the glorious structure of the Church. What may be the history of other intelligences, — the inhabitants of other worlds, if, indeed, there are other worlds, peopled like our own, we cannot tell; but we know that there is a world where rebellion arose, that there is a race like our own, who “kept not their first estate.” Yet he did not choose to build his Church in heaven, the scene of rebellion, nor construct it amid the ransomed spirits, selected from among them. The angels who “kept not their first estate, and left their own habitation” — for them no provision of mercy is made, no atoning sacrifice is offered; and they are reserved in chains and in darkness, until the great day. God verily took not on him, he did not lay hold on the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham; he took our degraded nature into mysterious and indissoluble union with his own; he came down to our polluted and accursed world, and there, at Calvary, laid deep and broad, in the death of the cross, in the shedding of his blood, the foundations of his Church. Hence it is that all eyes, throughout the universe, are directed to this spot; hence it is that this little speck — scarcely more in the vast system of worlds with which it stands connected — concentrates within itself the profoundest interest of the loftiest beings in the celestial world. Into the histories involved in the rise and progress of the Church, “the angels desire to look,” and all the wonders of redemption which it displays are unknown to “principalities and powers in heavenly places;” they may be known, not by the visible universe, glorious as it is, but by the Church, infinitely surpassing that in glory — “the manifold wisdom of God.”

(2.) As the architect of the Church, he drew the plan. In his own infinite mind, in the arrangements of the council of peace, ere he “clothed himself with light as with a garment,” ere he had given being, beauty, and harmony to the system of a material universe, ere “the morning stars had sung together,” or “the sons of God shouted for joy,” he had conceived the idea, and formed the plan of the Christian Church. And having settled, in its magnificent outline, and minutest details, the plan thus formed in his infinite mind, he has condescended to lay it down in the sacred volume, that it may be clearly understood, and no man presume to disturb its order, or interfere with its arrangements. In all that relates to its visible form, its internal economy, its scheme of doctrine, or its platform of discipline, we must be guided by the principles announced or the order sanctioned by the Divine architect, as these are revealed and recorded in his word. And woe unto him, who wilfully immolates them on the one hand, or thanklessly abandons them on the other. It is not, brethren, for any



mere fallible men to frame laws for the government of the Church; it is not for the princes and the potentates of this world to assume to themselves the headship of the Church, and in this capacity, by and with consent of their councils and their parliaments, to decree rites and ceremonies in the Church; and still less is it for them to impose them on the consciences of their subjects, and by pains and penalties, and fines and imprisonments, to force obedience to them. They may, indeed, do this, but it is at their peril; for though superior to all human tribunals in the possession of that power, which is too often in the hand of the oppressor, they must one day answer for it at the tribunal of Jesus Christ — answer for their daring assumption of his authority and invasion of his sacred prerogative. In all matters of doctrine and discipline, then, our first and last and final appeal is “to the law and to the testimony,” as contained in the sacred volume; and if the things required to be believed or to be performed are evidently at variance with the letter or the spirit of that book, we are bound to reject them as mere human inventions, be the consequences to ourselves what they may.

(3.) Again, as the architect of the Church, Jesus Christ selects and prepares the materials of which it is composed. And these are “living stones,” ransomed sinners, redeemed men, immortal spirits, hewn from the quarry of a common and desperate depravity, snatched from the ruin of a universal apostacy, renewed, justified, sanctified, and fitted each for the place assigned to it in the building, by the eternal Spirit, whose life-giving power, whose quickening influence, whose purifying grace, are essential to the efficiency, the beauty, and the perfection of the building. Other materials there may be in the visible sanctuary; and hence so many faults and defects of the Christian church appear even to the human eye; for men build upon the foundation “wood, hay, stubble,” base materials, destined finally to be consumed. But when the Lord himself adds to the church, it will be “such” — and only such — “as shall be saved.” Nor shall any other stones be suffered to occupy a prominent place in the building, when “the top-stone shall be brought forth with shoutings of Grace, grace unto it.”

(4.) Still further; as the architect of the church, Jesus Christ employs the workmen and pays them their wages. “Go ye into all the world,” said he to his disciples, “and preach the gospel to every creature.” This was the high commission, under which the first body of workmen employed in the erection of this spiritual building acted. That commission we own to be in force at the present hour; and to it all faithful preachers of the gospel must refer as their authority, to the end.

That the Christian ministry is a Divine institution, no man, I apprehend, can doubt, who regards the Bible as the word of God. But who are authorized to act under that commission, and what is a sufficient authority for their acting, are questions, about which there is no small stir in the present day. Some hold that ordination of a particular kind, involving a direct, lineal, ecclesiastical descent from the apostles, is essential to constitute a duly authorized preacher of the gospel and pastor in the Church, and that all beside are intruders into the sacred office, only pretenders to holy orders, and that the ministrations and ordinances of such are invalid. But with regard to this chimera of apostolical descent, it would be no very difficult task to show that to trace it is a thing all but impossible; that to do it, you must include in the line some persons of no very apostolic character; and that after all, a lineal descent of this description is little worth, unless it secure along with it a transmission of "the truth as it is in Jesus," in all the simplicity and power of its essential principles and sanctifying influence. What good is it, that a man has received ordination after the fashion or within the pale of this church, or that, if his doctrine is unsound, if his life is unholy? Better, sure, be conducted to heaven by the instrumentality of one who preaches and who lives the truth, however unauthorized and irregular his ministrations in the estimation of some, than be dragged down to perdition by the false doctrine and pestilential example of a man who boasts a valid ordination, an apostolic descent.

But is it irrelevant, on such a topic as this, to appeal to the test which our Lord has announced—"By their fruits ye shall know them?" If the validity and efficiency of a ministry be in souls saved unto God, in sinners repenting, and "bringing forth fruits meet for repentance," then are there multitudes who neither claim for themselves, nor desire for themselves, nor grudge to others, the credit of such apostolical descent, whose ministry is honored by seals of this description, as abundant in number and decided in character as many by whom they are disowned can boast.

We hesitate not to say, then, that all who are duly qualified with gifts and graces for the work, and are laboring simply and zealously, with a single eye to the Divine glory, in erecting this spiritual building, adding immortal and living stones to this building, are duly authorized and accredited workmen, and will assuredly at last, if found "faithful unto death," receive of him the promised reward; for as he employs the workmen, he also pays them their wages. Souls for their hire, seals to their ministry, constitute their present recompense; and by-and-by, in the presence of assembled worlds, when the chief Shepherd,

when the Master-builder shall appear for that purpose, "a crown of glory, that fadeth not away." And what mitred abbot, what crosiered ecclesiastic, what titled dignitary, what impurpled prelate, does he need to envy, to whom, though persecuted and despised on earth, his Lord shall say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord?" "Well done!" — oh! it shall ring through all the regions of the blest; and the joy which it awakens shall infinitely more than compensate for a life of ceaseless sacrifice and toil, though a thousand such lives were compressed into one, and that one life lengthened out to the days of Methuselah.

3. Christ is the foundation, Christ is the architect; and now, thirdly, Christ is the proprietor of the Church: "On this rock," he says, "I will build *my* Church."

He calls it his. Every living stone in that building is the purchase of his blood as well as the work of his hand, given to him by his Father, in covenant engagements, for this express purpose, that from such materials he might construct "a glorious church," and finally "present it to himself without spot or blemish, or any such thing." We talk of this church and of that, of your church and of my church, of the Church of England, and the Church of Ireland, and the Church of Scotland; but the true church is the Church of Christ. It is the property of no party, of no country, of no body, of no class or community or nation under heaven, but the property of Christ, composed of the holy and the excellent from among them all, and to be allowed and recognized and honored as his property, when all the communities who have laid claim to it on earth shall have ceased for ever to exist, when he shall come to be "glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe."

4. Finally, while Christ is the foundation, the architect, and the proprietor of the church, he is also the guarantee of its stability: "On this rock," he says, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

By "the gates of hell" are meant the powers of darkness, the thrones, the principalities, the principedoms, the dominations of the infernal world and all the forces that superstition, infidelity, and antichrist, in all their varied forms, can supply and league with them. These powers of darkness shall not prevail against it. Let them combine, let them make the effort; let them combine with all their art and cunning and sophistry, as they ever have done, as they are doing now, as they will still continue to do; let them do the utmost which ingenuity can suggest, which policy can approve, which power can execute; let them summon learning to their aid, and array themselves with the decrees of councils and

the acts of legislation ; let them nerve afresh the old arm of persecution ; let them open again the dungeons of the Inquisition ; let them kindle anew the fires of Smithfield ; let them ply their racks ; let them thunder their anathemas and mutter their curses ; as in time past, so in time to come, all shall prove impotent and vain ; like the storm, that only roots the monarch of the forest still further in the soil, or the billow, that leaves unmoved the rock at whose base it has broken.

“What though the gates of hell withstand,  
Yet must this building rise.”

“The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” They never have prevailed against it ; they may have seemed to do so for a season, but they never have in reality. Is the sun plucked from the firmament because sometimes it is obscured by clouds ? Are stars quenched in their orbit, because there are nights of darkness in which they fail to shine ? Clouds sometimes have hung around the Church, and there have been periods in her story when the enemy has seemed to triumph ; but those periods, like the summer cloud, have passed away, and from that temporary gloom the Church has emerged with augmented splendor. Did they prevail against the Church of Calvary ? They thought to do so ; they imagined that they had ; and all seemed lost, when the stone was rolled to the door of the sepulchre, when the seal was fixed and the Roman guard was set. But see what “a show he made of them openly,” and how he triumphed over them in his cross, when, having burst the barriers of the tomb, “He ascended up on high, leading captivity captive ;” and as he entered the celestial world amid the anthems and hallelujahs of cherubim and seraphim, and countless myriads of “the morning stars,” the powers of darkness were seen prostrate and crushed beneath his feet, and writhing in anguish for their previous overthrow. Did they prevail against it at the Reformation, with their racks, and their dungeons, and their bulls and all their instruments of torture ? They seemed to think they had ; but like the phoenix, the Church has risen from the flame, and, in reaction against the powers of darkness, has been augmented and gaining strength from that period to the present hour. Do they now ? Are the powers of darkness prevailing against the Church in these days in which we live ? They struggle, they boast, they utter great swelling words of vanity, but do they prevail ? Where is the evidence ? Where is the proof ? Is it in the twenty-seven million copies of the word of God, which the Bible Society alone has printed and sent abroad in every tongue and dialect of the world's vast family ? Is it in the noble army of missionaries, who are gathering materials for this



building from almost every region under heaven, and adorning the goodly structure with every variety of color the human countenance presents? Is it in the planting of missionary churches abroad, or in the idols abandoned by their former worshippers, that grace our missionary museum at home?

And if "the gates of hell" have never yet prevailed, if the gates of hell are not prevailing now, shall they ever prevail? No; they never shall. The truth of prophecy, the faithfulness of God, the certainty of the covenant, the rectitude of the Divine administration, the atonement of Christ, the value of his blood, the privileges of his intercession, all forbid. Instability there may be in all other things: "the mountains may depart, and the hills may be removed;" thrones may totter, the heavens may be wrapped together as a scroll, the elements may "melt with fervent heat," the earth and all its works may "be burned up;" palaces and pyramids, the noblest works of man, the Alps and the Andes, the mightiest works of God, may only serve as fuel to the general flame, and ruin once more drive her ploughshare over the creation; but the word of our God shall endure for ever; and ere the powers of darkness, ere "the gates of hell shall prevail against the Church," the pillars that support the eternal throne must fall, and the being of a God be blotted out from the universe which he has made.

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## S E R M O N V I.

INDUSTRY.

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BY REV. JAMES HAMILTON.  
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"Not slothful in business." — ROMANS, xli. 11.

Two things are very certain, — that we have all got a work to do, and are all, more or less, indisposed to do it: In other words, every man has a calling, and most men have a greater or less amount of indolence, which disinclines them for the work of that calling. Many men would have liked the gospel all the better, if it had entirely repealed the sentence, "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread;" had it proclaimed a final emancipation from industry, and turned our world into a merry play-ground or luxurious dormitory. But this is not what the gospel does. It does not abolish labor; it

gives it a new and a nobler aspect. The gospel abolishes labor much in the same way as it abolishes death ; it leaves the thing, but changes its nature. The gospel sweetens the believer's work ; it gives him new motives for performing it. The gospel dignifies toil : it transforms it from the drudgery of the workhouse or the penitentiary, to the affectionate offices and joyful services of the fire-side and the family circle. It asks us to do for the sake of Christ many things which we were once compelled to bear as a portion of the curse, and which worldly men perform for selfish and secondary reasons. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord." "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God ; and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord and not unto men, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ." The gospel has not superseded diligence. "Study to be quiet and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you." "If any man will not work, neither let him eat." It is mentioned as almost the climax of sin, "And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house ; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not : " as on the other hand, the healthy and right-conditioned state of a soul is "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

I. This precept is violated by those who have no business at all. By the bounty of God's providence, some are in such a situation that they do not need to toil for a subsistence ; they go to bed when they please, and get up when they can sleep no longer, and they do with themselves whatever they like ; and though we dare not say that their's is the happiest life, it certainly is the easiest. But it will neither be a lawful life nor a happy one, unless it have some work in hand, some end in view. Those of you who are familiar with the sea-shore, may have seen attached to the inundated reef, a creature, whether a plant or an animal you could scarcely tell, rooted to the rock as a plant might be, and twirling its long tentacula as an animal would do. This plant-animal's life is somewhat monotonous, for it has nothing to do but grow and twirl its feelers, float in the tide, or fold itself up on its foot-stalk when that tide has receded, for months and years together. Now, would it not be very dismal to be transformed into a zoöphyte ? Would it not be an awful punishment, with your human soul still in you, to be

anchored to a rock, able to do nothing but spin about your arms or fold them up again; and knowing no variety, except when the receding ocean left you in the daylight, or the returning waters plunged you into the green depths again, or the sweeping tide brought you the prize of a young periwinkle or an invisible star-fish?

But what better is the life you are spontaneously leading? What greater variety marks your existence, than chequers the life of the sea-anemone? Does not one day float over you like another, just as the tide floats over it, and find you much the same, and leave you vegetating still? Are you more useful? What real service to others did you render yesterday? What tangible amount of occupation did you overtake in the one hundred and sixty-eight hours of which the last week consisted? And what higher end in living have you than that polypus? You go through certain mechanical routines of rising, and dressing, and visiting, and dining, and going to sleep again; and are a little roused from your usual lethargy by the arrival of a friend, or the effort needed to write some note of ceremony. But as it curtsies in the waves, and vibrates its exploring arms, and gorges some dainty medusa, the sea-anemone goes through nearly the same round of pursuits and enjoyments with your intelligent and immortal self. Is this a life for a rational and responsible creature to lead?

II. But this precept is also violated by those who are diligent in trifles, — whose activity is a busy idleness. You may be very earnest in a pursuit which is utterly beneath your prerogative as an intelligent creature, and your high destination as an immortal being. Pursuits which are perfectly proper in creatures destitute of reason, may be very culpable in those who not only have reason, but are capable of enjoyments above the range of reason itself. We this instant imagined a man retaining all his consciousness transformed into a zoöphyte. Let us imagine another similar transformation; fancy that, instead of a polypus, you were changed into a swallow. There you have a creature abundantly busy, up in the early morning, for ever on the wing, as graceful and sprightly in his flight as tasteful in the haunts which he selects. Look at him, zigzagging over the clover field, skimming the limpid lake, whisking round the steeple, or dancing gaily in the sky. Behold him in high spirits, shrieking out his ecstasy as he has bolted a dragon-fly, or darted through the arrow-slits of the old turret, or performed some other feat of hirundine agility. And notice how he pays his morning visits, alighting elegantly on some house-top, and twittering politely by turns to the swallow on either side of him, and

after five minutes' conversation, off and away to call for his friend at the castle. And now he has gone upon his travels, gone to spend the winter at Rome or Naples, to visit Egypt or the Holy Land, or perform some more *recherche* pilgrimage to Spain or the coast of Barbary. And when he comes home next April, sure enough he has been abroad ; — charming climate, — highly delighted with the cicadas in Italy, and the bees on Hymettus ; — locusts in Africa rather scarce this season ; but upon the whole much pleased with his trip, and returned in high health and spirits. Now, dear friends, this is a very proper life for a swallow, but is it a life for you ? To flit about from house to house ; to pay futile visits, where, if the talk were written down, it would amount to little more than the chattering of a swallow ; to bestow all your thoughts on graceful attitudes, and nimble movements, and polished attire ; to roam from land to land with so little information in your head, or so little taste for the sublime or beautiful in your soul, that could a swallow publish his travels, and did you publish yours, we should probably find the one a counterpart of the other ; the winged traveller enlarging on the discomforts of his nest, and the wingless one, on the miseries of his hotel or his chateau ; you describing the places of amusement, or enlarging on the vastness of the country, and the abundance of the game ; and your rival eloquent on the self-same things. Oh ! it is a thought, not ridiculous, but appalling. If the earthly history of some of our brethren were written down ; if a faithful record were kept of the way they spend their time ; if all the hours of idle vacancy or idler occupancy were put together, and the very small amount of useful diligence deducted, the life of a bird or quadruped would be a nobler one ; more worthy of its powers and more equal to its Creator's end in forming it. Such a register is kept. Though the trifler does not chronicle his own vain words and wasted hours, they chronicle themselves. They find their indelible place in that book of remembrance with which human hand cannot tamper, and from which no erasure save one can blot them. They are noted in the memory of God. And when once this life of wondrous opportunities and awful advantages is over — when the twenty or fifty years of probation are fled away — when mortal existence, with its faculties for personal improvement and serviceableness to others, is gone beyond recall — when the trifler looks back to the long pilgrimage, with all the doors of hope and doors of usefulness, past which he skipped in his frisky forgetfulness — what anguish will it move to think that he was gambolled through such a world without salvation to himself, without any real benefit to his brethren, a busy trifler, a vivacious idler, a clever fool !



III. Those violate this precept who have a lawful calling, a proper business, but are slothful in it. When people are in business for themselves, they are in less risk of transgressing this injunction: though even there it sometimes happens that the hand is not diligent enough to make its owner rich. But it is when engaged in business, not for ourselves, but for others, or for God, that we are in greatest danger of neglecting this rule. The servant, who has no pleasure in his work, who does no more than wages can buy, or a legal agreement enforce; the shopman, who does not enter *con amore* into his employer's interest, and bestir himself to extend his trade as he would strive were the concern his own; the scholar, who trifles when his teacher's eye is elsewhere, and who is content if he can only learn enough to escape disgrace; the teacher, who is satisfied if he can only convey a decent quantum of instruction, and who does not labor for the mental expansion and spiritual well-being of his pupils, as he would for those of his own children; the magistrate or civic functionary, who is only careful to escape public censure, and who does not labor to make the community richer, or happier, or better for his administration: the minister, who can give his energies to another cause than the cause of Christ, and neglect his Master's business in minding his own; every one, in short, who performs the work which God or his brethren have given him to do in a hireling and perfunctory manner, is a violater of the divine injunction, "Not slothful in business." There are some persons of a dull and languid turn. They trail sluggishly through life, as if some painful viscus, some adhesive slime were clogging every movement, and making their snail-path a waste of their very substance. They do nothing with that healthy alacrity, that gleesome energy which bespeaks a sound mind even more than a vigorous body; but they drag themselves to the inevitable task with remonstrating reluctance, as if every joint were set in a socket of torture, or as if they expected the quick flesh to cleave to the next implement of industry they handled. Having no wholesome love to work, no joyous delight in duty, they do every thing grudgingly, in the most superficial manner, and at the latest moment. Others there are, who, if you find them at their post, you will find them dozing at it. They are a sort of perpetual somnambulists, walking through their sleep; moving in a constant mystery; looking for their faculties, and forgetting what they are looking for; not able to find their work, and when they have found their work not able to find their hands; doing every thing dreamily, and therefore every thing confusedly and incompletely; their work a dream, their sleep a dream; not repose, not refreshment, but a slumbrous vision of rest, a dreamy query concerning sleep; too late for

every thing, taking their passage when the ship has sailed, insuring their property when the house is burned, locking the door when the goods are stolen — men, whose bodies seem to have started in the race of existence before their minds were ready, and who are always gazing out vacantly as if they expected their wits were coming up by the next arrival. But, besides the sloths and somnambulists, there is a third class — the day-dreamers. These are a very mournful, because a self-deceiving generation. Like a man who has his windows glazed with yellow glass, and who can fancy a golden sunshine, or a mellow autumn on the fields even when a wintry sleet is sweeping over them, the day-dreamer lives in an elysium of his own creating. With a foot on either side of the fire — with his chin on his bosom, and the wrong end of the book turned towards him, he can pursue his self-complacent musings till he imagines himself a traveller in unknown lands — the explorer of Central Africa — the solver of all the unsolved problems in science — the author of some unprecedented poem at which the wide world is wondering — or something so stupendous that he even begins to quail at his own glory. The misery is, that whilst nothing is done towards attaining the greatness, his luxurious imagination takes its possession for granted; and with his feet on the fender, he fancies himself already on the highest pinnacle of fame; and a still greater misery is, that the time thus wasted in unprofitable musings, if spent in honest application and downright working, would go very far to carry him where his sublime imagination fain would be. It would not be easy to estimate the good of which day-dreams have defrauded the world. Some of the finest intellects have exhaled away in this sluggish evaporation, and left no vestige on earth except the dried froth — the obscure film which survives the drivel of vanished dreams; and others have done just enough to show how important they would have been had they awaked sooner, or kept longer awake at once. Sir James Mackintosh was one of the latter class. His castle-building “never amounted to conviction; in other words, these fancies have never influenced my actions; but I must confess that they have often been as steady and of as regular recurrence as conviction itself; and that they have sometimes created a little faint expectation, a state of mind in which my wonder that they should be realized would not be so great as it rationally ought to be.” Perhaps no one in modern times has been capable of more sagacious or comprehensive generalization in those sciences which hold court in the high places of human intellect than he; but a few hints and a fragment of finished work are all that remain. Coleridge never sufficiently woke up from his long day-dream to articulate distinctly any of the glorious visions which floated before

his majestic fancy, some of which we really believe that the world would have been the wiser for knowing. And, returning from secular philosophy to matters of Christian practice, have you never met those whose superior gifts would have made them eminently useful, and who had designs of usefulness, perhaps philanthropic schemes of peculiar ingenuity and beauty, but who are passing away from earth, if they have not passed away already, without actually attempting any tangible good? And yet so sincere are they in their own inoperative benevolence — so hard do they toil and sweat in their own Nephelococcygia, that nothing could surprise them more than the question — “What do ye more than others?” unless it were their own inability to point out the solid product and lay their hands on the actual results.

To avoid this guilt and wretchedness —

1. Have a business in which diligence is lawful and desirable. There are some pursuits which do not deserve to be called a business. *Æropus* was the king of Macedonia, and it was his favorite pursuit to make lanterns. Probably he was very good at making them, but his proper business was to be a king, and therefore the more lanterns he made, the worse king he was. And if your work be a high calling, you must not dissipate your energies on trifles, on things which, lawful in themselves, are still as irrelevant to you as lamp-making is irrelevant to a king. Perhaps some here are without any specific calling. They have neither a farm nor a merchandise to look after. They have no household to care for, no children to train and educate, no official duties to engross their time; they have an independent fortune, and live at large. My friends, I congratulate you on your wealth, your liberal education, your position in society, and your abundant leisure. It is in your power to be the benefactors of your generation; you are in circumstances to do an eminent service for God, and finish some great work before your going hence. What that work shall be I do not attempt to indicate; I rather leave it for your own investigation and discovery. Every one has his own line of things. Howard chose one path, and Wilberforce another; Harlan Page chose one, and Brainerd Taylor another. Mrs. Fletcher did one work, Lady Glenorchy another, and Mary Jane Graham a third. Every one did the work for which God had best fitted them, but each made that work their business. They gave themselves to it; they not only did it, by the bye, but they selected it and set themselves in earnest to it, not parenthetically, but on very purpose — the problem of their lives — for Christ's sake and in Christ's service, and held themselves as bound to do it as if they had been by himself expressly engaged for it. And, brethren, you must do the same. Those of you who do not need to toil for your daily bread, your very



leisure is a hint what the Lord would have you to do. As you have no business of your own, he would have you devote yourselves to his business. He would have you carry on, in some of its manifold departments, that work which he came to earth to do. He would have you go about his Father's business as he was wont to be about it. And if you still persist in living to yourselves, you cannot be happy. You cannot spend all your days in making pin-cushions or reading newspapers, or loitering in club-rooms and coffee houses, and yet be happy. If you profess to follow Christ, this is not a Christian life. It is not a conscientious, and so it cannot be a comfortable life. And if the pin-cushion or the newspaper fail to make you happy, remember the reason — very good as relaxations, ever so great an amount of these things can never be a business, and “wist ye not that you should be about your Father's business?”

2. Having made a wise and deliberate selection of a business, go on with it, go through with it. Persevering mediocrity is much more respectable and unspeakably more useful than talented inconstancy. In the heathery turf you will often find a plant chiefly remarkable for its peculiar roots; from the main stem down to the minutest fibre, you will find them all abruptly terminate, as if shorn or bitten off, and the silly superstition of the country people alleges, that once on a time it was a plant of singular potency for healing all sorts of maladies, and therefore the great enemy of man in his malignity bit off the roots in which its virtues resided. This plant, with this quaint history, is a very good emblem of many well-meaning but little-effecting people. They might be defined as *radicibus præmorsis*, or rather *inceptis succis*. The efficacy of every good work lies in its completion, and all their good works terminate abruptly and are left off unfinished. The devil frustrates their efficacy by cutting off their ends; their unprofitable history is made up of plans and projects, schemes of usefulness that were never gone about, and magnificent undertakings that were never carried forward; societies that were set agoing, then left to shift for themselves, and forlorn beings, who for a time were taken up and instructed, and just when they were beginning to show symptoms of improvement, were cast on the world again.

But others there are, who before beginning to build count the cost, and having collected their materials and laid their foundations deep and broad, go on to rear their structure, indifferent to more tempting schemes and sublimer enterprises subsequently suggested. The man who provides a home for a poor neighbor, is a greater benefactor of the poor than he who lays the foundation of a stately almshouse and never finishes a single apartment. The persevering teacher who guides one



child into the saving knowledge of Christ and leads him on to established habits of piety, is a more useful man than his friend who gathers in a room-full of ragged children, and after a few weeks of waning zeal, turns them all adrift on the streets again. The patriot who set his heart on abolishing the slave-trade, and after twenty years of rebuffs and revilings, of tantalized hope and disappointed effort, at last succeeded, achieved a greater work than if he had set afloat all possible schemes of philanthropy, and then left them, one after the other, to sink or swim. So short is life, that we can afford to lose none of it in abortive undertakings; and once we are assured that a given work is one which it is worth our while to do, it is true wisdom to set about it instantly; and once we have begun it, it is true economy to finish it.

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## S E R M O N V I I .

PAUL BEFORE FELIX.

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 BY DANIEL MOORE, M. A.  
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“And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time: when I have a convenient season, I will send for thee.”

ACTS XXI. 25.

THE Jews at Thessalonica spoke with much more truth than they were aware of, when, in describing the first introduction of Christianity into Europe, they exclaimed, “These that have turned the world upside down have come hither also.” Christianity *did* turn the world upside down; and that not before it needed turning. Everywhere around were seen the tokens of spiritual disorder: men were judged of by false standards, actions were weighed in deceitful balances, laws were framed on erroneous principles, and every thing denoted that the moral world had flown off from its centre, or, under the action of some strange disturbances, had travelled far out of its appointed orbit. The time was come, therefore, when it was needful that a change should pass over the spirits of men; that there should be, not a revolution of thought alone, but a recasting of language. Moral qualities were losing all their distinctness, by being called out of their proper names; men delighted “to call evil good, and good evil; to put darkness for light, and light for darkness; to put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.”

But Christianity gave mankind a new vocabulary, taught them the right use of language, and made words to become (what they could scarcely be said to have been before) the true representatives of thoughts and things. No purpose, either in politics or morals, seems to be answered by such conventions, as that a great general should ordinarily mean a great curse; that the most terrific scourge which can afflict humanity should be described as the glory of a nation's arms; that we should call a man high-spirited, when we mean to say he is resentful; or proclaim him destitute of spirit, because he aims to resemble the meek and lowly Jesus. Delusions like these, however, never want either for advocates among teachers, or partisans among the taught. In every age there are to be found those who would "say to the seers, see not, and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things; speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits;" and, on the other hand, there have rarely been wanting prophets, who, in compliance with such infatuated request, have been willing to prophesy their people into a smooth destruction, and have been careful only that they should die an easy death.

Not so, however, the great apostle of the Gentiles; he would be a prophet in chains, and, before those "in high places," was bold to denounce "spiritual wickedness." He would neither prophesy deceits to obtain his own deliverance, nor smooth things to conciliate his judge. He was one of those who was to "turn the world upside down," and, therefore, was only pursuing his vocation when he turned a judgment-hall into a sanctuary, and made a pulpit of the prisoner's bar; showing how the accused might arraign his judge, and the judge be made so to tremble on his own tribunal, that he was glad to wave the man of chains away, saying, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will send for thee."

The text presents to us two points for consideration: first, the topics of discourse selected by the apostle; and, then, the PRACTICAL EFFECT of the discourse on the mind of his principal hearer.

I. In considering the TOPICS OF DISCOURSE selected by the apostle, you will bear in mind the peculiar circumstances of his two principal hearers, Felix and Drusilla. The former, as you remember, was originally a slave of the emperor Nero; but, being raised to the dignity of procurator of Judæa, he exercised the imperial functions with such a mercenary soul, and by such open unfairness disgraced his judicial administration, that he compelled the Jews at last to petition for his removal. The other principal hearer, Drusilla, was the wife of an insignificant heathen king, who was then living, and who, after the most

painful sacrifices to obtain her hand, found himself basely supplanted by his more powerful neighbor, the procurator of Judæa.\* Such were the apostle's auditors: a ruler hated for his injustice, a woman enthroned in unblushing sin; and yet both evincing a strange and curious anxiety to hear this "ambassador in bonds" discourse "concerning the faith in Christ."

And now, observe with what holy skill this "workman that needed not to be ashamed" proceeded to "divide the word of truth." The first thing that cannot fail to be observed is, that he does not direct his reproofs against what he knew to be the vices of his noble hearers, but that he is wholly taken up in expatiating on the blessedness of the contrary virtues. It was from no want of faithfulness to the terms of his high commission, "boldly to rebuke vice," that the apostle did not arouse the moral indignation of the assembled courtiers, by one of those graphic delineations of character which sometimes gave to his pictures the attributes and vividness of things of life. Easily could his vast mental resources have evoked a spectre of tyranny, of which the living counterpart sat before him, — of an oppressor, seated on a purchased throne, ruling with a rod of iron, and pampering his mean soul, from day to day, with "the wages of unrighteousness." We should then have seen the pale wrath gathering on the monster's brow, and revenge choking all his powers of utterance, as he sunk under the withering details of the hireling crying out for his defrauded wages, and the widow suing for her alienated portion, and the orphan, with no advocate but his miseries, and no weapon but his tears, pouring forth his disregarded suit to a Father that dwelt in heaven. But this holy preacher acted upon the spirit of his Master, and therefore resolved to prove, that, though he hated the sin much, yet he loved the sinner more; that, if he kindled coals of fire, it was not to consume, but to melt, to soften, to fuse into a mould of penitential humbleness the iron soul of the transgressor; and, for this end, he knew how worse than useless would be any irritating exhibitions of those judicial frauds, the cry of which had so long and so loudly entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. He adopted, therefore, the wiser, and, as the event proved, the more effectual course of reasoning on topics, which, while they disarmed his hearers of all hostility against himself, would yet pierce, even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, the guilty pair before whom he had been desired to preach.

Accordingly he opened his discourse by reasoning in favor of *righteousness*; taking that term first, perhaps, in its most comprehensive meaning, as denoting moral rectitude, or whatsoever is due either to

\* Josephus, lib. xx. c. 1.

God or man. All irreligion is essentially unjust, as withholding from God his rightful due in the affections of our hearts, and in the obedience of our lives. It involves, also, a want of rectitude to our fellow-men, in the violation of the claims of justice and benevolence. But, more particularly, and pointedly, he would reason of righteousness in a public magistrate ; of the benefits to a nation, of the acceptableness to God, of the calm satisfaction to a judge's own mind, when, unawed by threats, and inaccessible to a bribe, he weighed all causes in an even balance, and ruled his people in the fear of God : and thus he would show this imperial favorite how he might have that which would be far more ornamental than his purple, and raise him much higher than his throne ; that the noblest kingdom was the empire over the hearts of his subjects, and a people's love the brightest jewel in his crown !

By the same spirit was the apostle influenced in the selection of his second topic of discourse. He reasoned of *temperance* ; of the habit of self-control, of the blessedness of keeping all our appetites under a holy and self-denying restraint, and of the moral benefits to a nation, when those who sat in high places threw a fresh lustre over their dignities, by their unblemished purity of life. The occasion had not been unfit for the preacher to have discoursed of the griefs of an injured husband, basely supplanted in his affections, his house left unto him desolate, and his wife polluting God's holy altar, that she might bind round her dishonored brow the diadem of borrowed royalty. But the apostle knew, that, though this might be the best way to arouse the passions, it was the worst way to win the heart. He chose, therefore, to enlarge on that wise and beautiful subordination of the natural affections, described in Scripture as temperance, which makes up the spiritual harmony of the soul, which is the essence of all gospel liberty, which lays the foundation for a holy life, and thus educates the soul for future companionship with God. " Lord, who is he that shall ascend unto thy holy hill ? and who shall rise up in thy holy place ? even he that hath clean hands and a pure heart, and that hath not lift up his eyes unto vanity, nor sworn to deceive his neighbor." Without holiness, therefore, no man, either here or hereafter, shall see the Lord. Not here ; for it is not more true that God is of too pure eyes to look upon iniquity, than that iniquity is of too weak eyes to look upon God. " I heard thy voice in the garden," said Adam, " and I hid myself, for I was afraid : " the wicked cannot hide their sins amidst the trees of the garden, but they will try to hide themselves. Not hereafter ; for, to be able to see God, to pierce through the dim opaque of nature and of sense, to penetrate, with eagle vision, the regions of light unapproachable, is a privilege which God hath reserved exclusively for those who are " washed



from their filthiness." "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

But the apostle proceeds to a third topic, the consideration of the time when our observance or neglect of these duties of righteousness and temperance should be brought under the immediate cognisance of heaven; when Felix shall be as Paul, and the judge shall stand by his prisoner, and both must put in their pleas in answer to what the God of heaven shall lay to their charge. He reasoned of "*judgment to come.*" Here was a new theme to Felix: of some judgments he knew enough, and of the practice of some judges too; how bribes might buy them, and artifice deceive them, and a cunning rhetoric blind them, and the fear of man turn them aside. But this was a judgment where each man would be his own accuser; where advocates would be placed on their own trial; where all bribes will have been left on this side of the grave, and where all subterfuges will be unmasked before the full light of heaven.

In some respects, this would be a new theme to Drusilla also: she was a Jewess, and was curious to hear what the apostle would say about Christ; and, in substance, the apostle's answer to her would be, "He whom your nation have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain, is now exalted at the right hand of power, wielding over the spirits of men the sceptre of universal empire, putting forth the energies of his deity to save contrite and believing souls, but whetting his two-edged sword for the destruction of the impenitent and the sinner. Judge not by what your eyes have seen or your ears have heard; he who departed in weakness shall return in power; he who died in dishonor shall appear in glory; he who was led as a lamb *to* the slaughter shall return like a lion *for* the slaughter. He came the first time to seek and to save; he will come the second time to find and to destroy. Once, it was enough that he should be seen by the traveller who rested at the inn, or by the wise men who came from far with gifts; but then he shall be seen by 'every eye,' by men from their emptied graves, and by angels from their forsaken thrones. Then shall all kindreds wail, as they witness the commencing pomp of judgment; as the trump's shrill blast announces the sealed-up book of time; as, above the world's ashes, there rises a great white throne, and as before it are arrayed, in ranks small and great, the throngs of congregated dead. And then the angels, those ministers that do the judge's pleasure, shall bring forth the books of heaven. First, they shall unclasp the volume of the Book of Life, unloose all its seven seals, and read out aloud the names of the redeemed of God. And then another book shall be opened; the Book of the Divine Remembrance, the diary of conscience

while it was allowed to speak, but kept up by angels when its seared tongue could speak no more. Strange, passing strange, will be the soul's meeting with its old associates; sins, of which there may remain no more trace within us than of a foot-print washed by the returning tide, will then rise up before us in overwhelming and terrific aggregate: our own tongue must confess them, our own hands must subscribe the registry; thus setting the seal to the unerring faithfulness of those things which were written in the books."

Brethren, how little do we realize this thought of the future judgment as perpetuating, in all their breadth and vividness, the characters of once-committed sin. Offences which we write on sand are transcribed by angels on to a tablet of everlasting marble: tyrants may write in faint characters their morning wrongs, and leave them to be washed away by the dark tide of their evening guilt; but there are no such obliterating tides in heaven; all that we think, say, intend, or do, is there "graven with an iron pen, and with lead in the rock for ever." In God's book not only are "all our members written," but the sins of those members too; the eye in its wantonness, the tongue in its deceit, the hand with its bribes, the heart with its impure and unholy thoughts, the ear turning deaf to the poor man's call, and the feet in their swiftness to shed innocent blood. Yea, even the blank leaves in this book shall contribute to our everlasting undoing: duties not done, warnings not regarded, opportunities not cultivated, and holy convictions not followed up, and improved, and deepened, will appear as witnesses against us, and supply lashes for that final scourge which shall drive the impenitent soul from the everlasting presence of God.

II. But we must proceed to the other division of our subject: The PRACTICAL EFFECT of the discourse on the mind of its principal hearer; and the important lessons to be gathered from the conduct and language of Felix. At the end of the discourse, Felix trembled, and answered, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." Felix trembled! What a striking testimony have we here to the power of conscience; to the yet undethroned authority of heaven's viceroy in the human soul; to the difficulty of effacing the characters of that inward decalogue, in whose broken tables nature still reads her law, and the heathen finds himself "without excuse:" and, until it is seared over by the hot iron of hardening and unrepented sin, or until its fine edge is blunted by a course of oft-resisted and despised convictions, will conscience continue to prosper in that whereunto God hath sent it. In the soul's deep solitude

it will hold its court: itself the giver of the law; itself the witness to its transgression; itself the judge to sentence; itself the executioner to avenge; all as if in mute rehearsal of that deeper tragedy, where, on the high platform of heaven's judicature, both quick and dead must stand.

Thus was it in the bosom of Felix. Torpid and trance-like had Heaven's messenger been lying in the lap of sin; but, at the sound of Paul's voice, she proved she was "not dead, but sleeping;" telling him, in her stifled utterances, to hear the anticipative verdict of a judgment yet to come; and, instantly the governor forgot his dignity, as much as the prisoner forgot his chains. The two parties appeared, for the moment, to have changed places; conscience having made a coward of the judge, and truth having invested the captive with more majesty than the purple. And why, we may ask, did not the genuine conversion of the governor ensue upon this? The reasoning of the apostle had convinced his understanding, and had both awakened and alarmed his conscience; wherefore did it not penetrate further, into the inner chamber of the heart? Without controversy, this is the natural tendency of deep spiritual convictions; left to itself, truth would as assuredly issue in the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, as water, unobstructed, would run down the mountain's side. But we may oppose a force to this spiritual gravitation; the Spirit of God will work powerfully *with* us, but it will not always work irresistibly *against* us; and, therefore, if, after a man has had the eyes of his understanding opened, and the powers of his moral sense awakened, he should still resolve, like Felix, to say to every message addressed to his soul, "Go thy way for this time," with sorrowful steps and slow will the insulted Spirit retire from his heart, leaving conscience to return to its stupor, and the understanding to close its eyes again.

And, here, let us not lose ourselves in any metaphysical subtleties, as to where the constraining energy of the Spirit terminates, and the permitted exercise of the human will begins. Philosophy cannot tell us any thing more than our own consciousness; and, if it could tell us any thing contrary to it, we should pause before we received it: and this consciousness tells us, that we have it in our power almost at any time to dismiss an unwelcome subject from our thoughts. "The most obvious of the powers which the mind possesses over the train of its thoughts," says an eminent authority, "is its power of singling out any one of them at pleasure; of detaining it; of making it a particular object of attention;"\* and, for the calling into exercise of this power, there is no readier or more effective way than that resorted to

\* Stewart's *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, p. 298.



by the guilty Felix: namely, by the forced dismissal of every external association, by which the succession of disagreeable thoughts could be kept up; or by surrounding ourselves with other outward objects, which should divert these thoughts into a different channel. The conduct of Felix, therefore, is intelligible enough: with the sermon in his ears, and with the preacher before his eyes, and having seated at his side the shameless partner of his crimes, he could think of nothing but "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." Conscience seemed to owe all its power to the presence of the apostle; and, so long as Paul was allowed to lash him with "whips," would conscience have the power to scourge his soul with "scorpions."\* To break the chain, therefore, to stop the succession of painful thoughts, he resolves on an immediate dismissal of the preacher, saying, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."

But the most important of the practical lessons to be gathered from this history remains to be considered: namely, the strange infatuation of unconverted men, in supposing that, though they trifle with conviction for the present, a time will yet come, when they shall be better prepared to yield to them. "When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." The great fallacy of life seems to be a persuasion, that, having for a given part of our days run in the way of the ungodly, we shall afterwards be able to retrace our steps, and, with the speed of thought, find ourselves in the ways of God. All considerations of time, habit, diminished strength, and contracted insensibility to religious impressions, are overlooked; whilst the soul yields itself to the fascinations of delay, pledges the future to noble and high resolves, and sees facilities for duty in some distant morrow, which it thinks are wholly wanting "while it is called to-day." In vain does reason urge, that, if we find it hard to put out the first spark of sin, we shall find it harder still to extinguish the raging flame; that, if we cannot pluck up sin when it is a green twig, it will be in vain to try when custom has given it the strength of a sturdy tree: spell-bound and reason-proof, we resolve that it is better to "contend with horses," than let "the footmen" weary us; and that, though, at this time, we faint in the land of peace, yet, only give us a convenient season, and we will breast even "the swellings of Jordan."

In our remaining remarks, therefore, we would be considered as endeavoring to prove the utter improbability, both from the constitution of the human mind, and from the lessons of human experience, that to any person postponing the work of repentance to a more conve-

\* "My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,  
And every tongue brings in a several tale."—SHAKESPEARE.



nient season, such season should ever come. We are not about to dig for such an one an early grave, nor to introduce the contingency, that, suddenly and unlooked-for, may the last foeman come. But, on the contrary, even supposing him to have a special indemnity against both these evils : that, in his right hand, were a charter, securing to him length of days, and, in his left, a promise that he should die as gradually and as slowly as the sun when sinking into his "golden rest ;" we still affirm, that there is the highest human probability that he never *will* repent, if he systematically despise warnings and convictions *now*. We all know that there are certain things which are inseparable from a state of reconciliation and acceptance with Almighty God ; that there are truths to be learned, enmities to be rooted up, habits to be formed, dispositions to be cherished, and that, till all this be done, we can neither die happily, nor rise unblameably.

Not, however, to amplify too largely on the parts of the saintly life, let us confine our reasonings to two obvious requisites : the ILLUMINATION of the mind, and the SANCTIFICATION of the heart ; the way of holiness understood, and the habit of holiness formed ; the light which shows heaven to us, and the grace which prepares us for heaven. Now, first, what is the hope, that, in old age, (the convenient season of all procrastinators,) our power of apprehending spiritual truth will be as keen and vigorous as we should find it now ? That we do not select old age as the time for learning the rudiments of a language, nor employ its impaired faculties in acquiring new principles of science, arises from the consciousness that our powers of intelligence become weakened as the frame with which it is united becomes enfeebled or decayed. We have reason to believe that the brain is the material medium through which the mind acts ; that is, that certain altered states of the material substance are connected with certain altered states of the sentient mind ; and this appears to be an ultimate fact of our nature, which, from the want of homogeneousness in the substances affected, we consider to be incapable of further analysis. Unexplained itself, however, this mystery may, perhaps, explain other mysteries ; it may explain wherefore aged persons have such difficulty in receiving new impressions, especially when, in order to their reception, they must displace others, which they had admitted and cherished long before : for it is at least possible, that the substance, with which the thinking mind is united, obeying the law of other substances in the human system, may acquire, by long growth and use, a settled habit or form, which the impaired energy of old age renders it not easy to disturb. Hence, perhaps, in part, that practical difficulty which ministers of the gospel so constantly meet with, when

called to converse with an aged man, for the first time, on the things which belong unto his peace. They find that opinions, which have been the growth, perhaps, of an ordinary life, have entirely possessed themselves of his mind; alike indisposing him either for unlearning what is false, or for acquiring a knowledge of that which is true: so that, in however many lights they may place the gospel-way of salvation, his mind does not readily embrace it, because already pre-engaged with some other way. The doctrine of a sinner's acceptance through faith in the blood of Christ, is like a new language to him; his understanding appreciates not the necessity of such a doctrine; and, when taken in connection with that changed state of his moral affections required by the gospel, his heart is unwilling to submit to it: so that, at every pause in our exhortation to him to stay his soul on the Savior's righteousness, some expression falls from his lips evincing a continued dependence on his own.

But, brethren, if it be a hard thing merely to instruct the hoary head in the way of righteousness; if every year of delayed conversion lessens our capacity even to comprehend God's method of pardoning and restoring sinners; how immeasurably more difficult shall we find it to fulfil that other requirement of heaven, the SANCTIFICATION of the heart! to plant, in this overrun and howling waste, the seeds of that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord! For, in order to this, we have not only to expel the love of the world, to break the associated chain of past enjoyments, to undo all, as all had never been; but we have to form a new habit in the soul, to make every thing yield to the power of a new affection, and to bind every disobedient and traitorous thought in sweet captivity to the will of God. But, would either reason or experience teach us that this can be an easy task? Do we not all know the moral force of habit? that mysterious suggestive faculty, whereby our actions, whether good or evil, reproduce and perpetuate themselves; till, at last, they become as integral portions of our moral being, and lord it over our souls with the tyranny of a second nature. Indeed, to estimate, in some degree, the difficulty of effecting a revolution such as that supposed by gospel-sanctification, it is only needful to single out any one from the prevalent habits and dispositions of life, and to count the time and cost of changing it for another, which should be opposite. Let the clenched hand of parsimony learn to practise a liberal and enlarged munificence; let the boaster of high degree turn a contemptuous eye on all the relics of ancestral pride; and we may then imagine how hard it is for these habit-dyed Ethiopians to change their skins, or these sin-marked leopards to efface their spots!

The probability, therefore, that a postponed repentance will ever be an effectual or sincere repentance, may be put to an easy test. If, in a dying hour ; if, in the day of the mind's feebleness, and decay, and waste ; if, in a brief remnant, cut off from a life of worldliness, or sleep, or sin, the soul can evoke into existence a new order of affections, and, in the twinkling of an eye, put on its dress for heaven ; we need moralize no longer on the perils of spiritual delay ; we may let conscience sleep on in the lap of the great thief of time, saying, for this time, let us "eat and drink," and hereafter we can repent and die. But if, on the contrary, worldly habits strike root downwards, the more they bear fruit upwards ; if sanctification demands that every ancient idol fall and be crushed before the ark of God ; and if time, if labor, if holy and persevering effort, be needed to educate immortal spirits for the skies ; then, was ever folly like his folly, who, with a conviction that his soul is at this moment lying under the wrath of God, would say to the messenger of heaven, whoever he may be, "Go thy way for this time ; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee ?"

Neither are the results of experience, as collected from those who are in the habit of attending the closing scenes of life, at all opposed to the conclusions of antecedent reasoning. Physicians concur with Divines in attesting, that men, for the most part, die as they live, and that the exhaustion of nature's strength alone frequently incapacitates them for any essential change in the state and affections of the mind. Thus, those who live the life of the unrighteous, die the death of the unrighteous also ; the power of unbelief is as victorious in the dying hour, as in the hours of health ; sin, the world, and the devil hold their victims in strong delusion to the last ; and that Savior, who, through life, had been regarded as "a root out of a dry ground," appears, even in death, to be destitute of all "form and comeliness."

Let us conclude with one or two practical reflections : — First, how great is the danger of resisting religious convictions ! of turning a deaf ear to language, which, by its effects on our minds, is discerned to be the voice of God ! It is not needful that we should have a Paul preaching before us, or a Drusilla seated beside us, in order that words uttered in the sanctuary should appear to have been so expressly written for us, to have come home to our consciences with so much of closeness and of power, that, although we could not send the preacher away, we were but too willing to be sent away by the preacher ; hailing with gladness the breaking up of the solemn assembly, welcoming with eagerness the in-rushing current of worldly thoughts, and giving a tacit promise to our consciences to call for these holy convictions at some



more convenient season. But, how know we that these convictions will come when we call them? Where is our warrant for supposing that the Holy Spirit will bide our time; will tarry our convenience; will wait the day when we, having nothing else to occupy us, will permit him to rekindle his quenched flame, and to repeat the warnings which we neglected or despised before? Surely, all experience would look the other way; would teach, that convictions lose their power when they lose their freshness. Felix, we are told, heard Paul preach *many times* afterwards; but we do not find that he ever TREMBLED after *the first*.

Lastly, how great is the affront to God, of this intention to yield to religious convictions hereafter! To delay our preparation for heaven is not a foolish thing only, not a dangerous thing only; it is a profane, a wicked, a God-dishonoring thing. We cannot purpose to amend our lives to-morrow, without also purposing to insult God to-day. To tell God that we mean to repent next year, is to tell him that we do not mean to repent before. We may keep our resolution, or we may not keep it; but the mere *forming* of it implies that, until the time specified arrives, we intend to go on sinning still, to make more work for his pardoning mercy in the interim; cutting out, as it were, a space from the term of our moral probation, and bargaining with high heaven for an indulgence for prospective sin.

Hear we, then, the conclusion of the whole matter, which we may fairly sum up, in a single sentence, thus: that REPENTANCE DELAYED IS MERCY TRIFLED WITH, and A HOLY LIFE INTENDED ONLY, IS LIFE ETERNAL LOST. To say to any religious conviction, "Go thy way for this time," is to degrade reason, to injure the soul, to disparage heaven, to dishonor God. It is as if we designed to give God the worst of our days, and spend on self and sin the best; to reserve a lamb of the first year for the world, and to bring to the Lord only the maimed and the blind: it is to offer at the shrine of the evil one our manhood, our vigor, our freshness, our strength; and to lay on the altar of the God of heaven an offering of disease, decay, old age, and mental feebleness. God grant that we may bring no more of these vain oblations; but now, in the accepted time, now, in our convenient season, may "offer an offering in righteousness, and call upon the name of the Lord!" Amen.



## SERMON VIII.

CHRISTIANITY A SYSTEM OF LOVE.

BY REV. JOHN ANGELL JAMES.

"By love serve one another."—GALATIANS v. 13.

CHRISTIANITY is a system of love, — of love in its purest, brightest, and divinest form. It is an emanation from the mind and heart of infinite and eternal Benevolence. Its doctrines are the truths of love; its principles are the rules of love; its invitations are the offers of love; its promises are the assurances of love; its very threatenings are the severities of love; and its one great design is, to expel selfishness from the human bosom, and to plant in its room a principle of holy and universal philanthropy. Hence a man may be so intimately acquainted with all the evidences of this Divine system, as to be enabled, by the most powerful and subtle logic, to defend its outworks against the attacks of infidelity; he may understand, and be able to arrange all its doctrines as articles of faith in the most symmetrical order; he may also be able to harmonize seeming discrepancies and contradictions; but still, if he know not that the essence of Christianity is love, he has no sympathy within his inner soul, he has mistaken its genius and its spirit, and is as blind to its richest glories, as the individual whose darkened eye-balls never look on the glories of the sky, nor the beauties of the earth.

My subject is in harmony with the feelings of my own heart, with the movements of the day, and with the design for which we are assembled this evening. The text is love; and I hope the sermon will, in accordance with the text, be love also.

In the first place, I shall endeavor to explain the nature, and to exhibit the grounds and manifestations of Christian love; in the second place, show some of the reasons why the different denominations of professing Christians should exercise this love one to another; thirdly, point out the manner in which we may manifest this disposition, and then urge a few appropriate and cogent motives.

I. In the first place, I am to explain the nature and exhibit the grounds and exercises of Christian love.

That artificer, as it has been called, of deification, the corrupt soul of man, never once, amidst all its multiplied devices, struck out the idea of absolute goodness. And how should it? All its prototypes

for the formation of its gods, were founded on itself — on its own passions. But what idolatry could not do, and human reason in the highest stretch of its powers could never approach, the apostle, in one beautiful expression, has set before us — “God is love.” This we owe to Revelation, and it never could have come from any other source. The love of God is not an infinite quietism of the Divine mind, retired from all human affairs and leaving the world to take care of itself; it is an active principle.

There are two kinds of love in the Divine mind; the love of complacency, which it bears to all the holy parts of creation, and the love of benevolence, which it bears to the whole creation irrespective of moral character. Analogous to this, there is in the mind of every good man, a two-fold love; the love of complacency, which he always bears towards the righteous, and the love of benevolence, which he is to bear to the whole sentient creation. The apostle distinguishes these two, where he says, add “to brotherly kindness, charity.” Beyond that inner circle, where brotherly kindness “lives and moves and has its being,” there is an outer circle, in which charity also is to revolve and perform its part. And, be it recollected, that we are to be no less assiduous in the duties of the outer circle, than we are in those of the inner; and that man, whatever his professions to brotherly kindness may be, has but the name who adds not to it charity.

Look at the operations of charity, or the love of benevolence. It was this which existed in the mind of Deity from eternity, and in the exercise of which he so loved our guilty world, as to give his “only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” It was on the wings of charity, that the Son of God flew from heaven to earth, on an errand of mercy to our lost world; it was charity that moved in the minds and hearts of the apostles, and urged them, with the glad tidings of salvation, from country to country. The whole missionary enterprise is founded, not of course on the basis of brotherly kindness, but on that of charity. All those splendid instances that have been presented to us of the exercise of philanthropy, and with which your memories are familiar, are all the operations of this Divine charity. See Howard, leaving the seclusion of a country gentleman, giving up his elegant retreat, and all its luxurious gratifications, pacing to and fro through Europe, plunging into dungeons, battling with pestilence, weighing the fetters of the prisoner, ganging the diseases even of the pest-house, — all under the influence of heavenly charity. See Wilberforce, through twenty years of his life, lifting up his unwearied voice, and employing his fascinating eloquence against the biggest outrage that ever trampled on the rights of

humanity. What formed his character, sketched his plan, inspired his zeal, but charity? See that illustrious woman, lately departed, so ripe for glory, and so richly invested with it, who interested herself amidst the prisoners of Newgate, — to chain their passions, to reclaim their vices, and to render them more meet for society, which had condemned them as its outcasts. What was it, that gave to Mrs. Fry her principle of action, — what, indeed, was the principle itself, but charity?

Let us, then, my dear friends, not confine our attention exclusively to “brotherly kindness,” but passing this narrower boundary, go out into the great world, with a principle like that which I have now described — which existed in the bosom of Deity, was displayed by the Son of God upon the cross, and which was the basis of the origin of that Institution which it is my delight and my honor to plead this evening.

But I am directed particularly, by the manner in which I intend to treat the subject this evening, to “brotherly kindness” — to brotherly love, as the word would be more emphatically rendered. Brotherly love is founded on two things: a common relation and a common character. It is the love of all those who are with us disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ — children by regeneration of the one living and true God. This is the ground of brotherly love; and if it exist on such ground as this, the man who loves one brother loves all, and he who loves not all, loves none. We must go higher, and sink deeper, for the grounds and motives of brotherly love, than the names, the greatest, the most venerable, and the most venerated names amongst men. It must be something deeper than Calvin, or Luther, or Whitfield, or Wesley; we must never stop for the foundation of brotherly love, until we touch the rock of ages, which rock is Jesus Christ. He that loves others only for the sake of man, loves them with an affection infinitely lower than he who loves them for the sake of Christ and of God.

But there is a common character, which is also a ground of brotherly love, as well as a common relation. The objects of this affection bear one common impress — the image of the heavenly Father. In human families, it is sometimes extremely difficult, if not impossible, to trace any resemblance between the children and the parents. Not so in the Divine family. God, in regeneration, never begets a child, but in his own likeness; and where there is not the image of the Father, there cannot be the relation. The family likeness, in that circle where none are related to God by a more distant relationship than that of a child, is holiness; holiness is the family feature of the household of faith. And where we see holiness, the mind of Christ, the image of God — for these are convertible terms; whatever be the color of the



skin of the man that bears this image, whatever be the nation which gave him birth, whatever be the party name by which he is distinguished — there we are to recognize an object, to which we are to be drawn by the irresistible attraction of our Father's image, and by the mighty influence of a new nature in our own souls. And the man that sees all this, and yet waits and wishes for a second reason for his affection — who closes his hand, places it in his bosom, keeps his feelings in abeyance, and holds back his heart, until he has found a denominational relationship, has not a spark of brotherly love in his soul. What! shall the name of Jesus, shall the character of God, be not enough to engage our love to one, who bears the name and the likeness of our Father, and stands united to our Savior by the tie of a common faith, till we have found out that he is related to us by party name, as well as to God by the bond of a new nature.

And how, my brethren, does brotherly love operate where it exists? I shall attempt no description of my own, except a passing remark, as I go forward, on that which the apostle has already given us. "Love suffereth long" — is not easily roused into resentment or to malice by injuries, great or small: "is kind" in words, in actions, and in spirit; the law of kindness is upon its lips, and the fruit of kindness drops from its hand. "Love envieth not." Envy is that misery which we feel at the sight of another superior or more excellent character, which makes us miserable at the sight of it, and causes us to hate the more eminent one, on which the diabolical glance is fixed — than which is not to be found a temper nearer akin to that which rages through hell. "Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up" — does not boast what it has done, can do, or will do, what it is, or what it has been — but is clothed with the garment of humility. "Love doth not behave itself unseemly" — keeps its place, like a soldier in the ranks, and steps not out of the position, in which it has been placed. "Love seeketh not her own" — abhors selfishness, looks upon the things of others, as well as upon its own; "is not easily provoked" — is not passionate, giving way to ebullitions of rage of any kind; "thinketh no evil" — is not hasty to impute a bad motive, as long as a good one can be found, for the actions of another; "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth" — takes no pleasure in the failings and misconduct of a foe, but delights in the manifestations of excellence, even when its own cause would thus seem to be damaged by what it discerns in another; "beareth," or covereth, "all things," — has not a microscope in its hand, ever to magnify the failings that are near, nor a telescope, to bring near those that are remote, but a mantle, to cover all that need not be exposed to public view; "believeth all things," to the advan-



tage of another ; “ hopeth all things,” where it has not ground for faith ; “ endureth all things ” — makes any sacrifice, bears any labor, for the benefit of others. Such are the manifestations of love.

Now for a moment or two dwell on the importance which is attached to it by the various representations which are given of it in the word of God.

It is the outward manifestation of an inward principle of belief — “ Faith worketh by love.” It is the evidence of regeneration, in the possession of which a man may as certainly conclude that he is a child of God, as if a seraph were dispatched from the throne, to tell him that he had seen his name written in the Lamb’s book of life. It is the grand novelty of the Christian dispensation, like to which nothing can be found in our world, like to which even Judaism supplied nothing as to its model, its meaning and its motives. It is the great law of the Christian dispensation : “ This is my commandment,” said the Savior — mine emphatically — “ that ye love one another.” It is the badge of discipleship : “ By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.” Philosophers and teachers had given to their disciples some peculiar sentiments or mark. Says Christ, Love shall be the badge of my disciples ; and let that man be accounted an impostor, a pretender, a hypocrite, whatever else he may have, who has not my mark upon him, and is not distinguished by love to his brethren.

Such, brethren, is love. How excellent ! Love, without any selfish, interested ally, neither darkened by hatred nor shaded by caprice, is an attribute which pertains to Deity, and that which sums up all the others. This fair spirit sits enthroned in the heavens, where she lives as a principle omnipotent, an element Divine ; she dwells in brightness and in eternity with the Almighty. Her music is the song of the angelic host, the sigh of the sympathetic spirit, the prayer of the humble and the contrite, the gratitude expressed to the author of every mercy, and the word of kindness dropped from the lip of charity. Love prevailed over the creation of the world, made man almost an angel, and gave him as his residence a paradise almost a heaven. Love preserves the harmony of the upper sphere, and marks out the progress of the soul through troubles here, and immortality hereafter. Her form was seen, her voice was heard on earth, when the Son of God became incarnate ; and he has bequeathed to his church, as an inestimable legacy, the power of love, as the essence of his religion.

But, brethren, is there all this beautiful display of love amongst us that there should be ? If an angel that knew nothing of ecclesiastical history, but was totally unacquainted with all the details of its darken-

ed page, and knew nothing of the church of God, but that it was a company of men and women, redeemed by the precious blood of him who became incarnate, before whose throne he bowed, regenerated by the same Spirit which had filled his heavenly mind with holiness, and destined for that blessed world, from which he had dropped down upon men — I say, if such a visitant came among us, what kind of beings would he expect to see in men and women thus circumstanced? Would he not look that they should appear as so many sparkling forms of pure, bright love, so cemented to one another by their common love to their Divine Father and his to them, as that they should scarcely have any separate interest, inclination, or will — all filled with the most complacent benignity one towards another, each contributing to the happiness of all, and all building up the happiness of each; who though peradventure they may not in all things think alike, nor be marshalled under the banner of one particular regiment, yet would never allow their differences to embitter their hearts, or to alienate their affections one from another; in short, would he not expect to find in our world so many pieces of immortal glory, flashing the lustre of that world from which he himself came? Alas! what grief he would feel, what disappointment he would experience, at hearkening to the bitter controversy and witnessing the wide alienation of professing Christians! Would he not conclude that he had lost his way, mistaken his world, lighted upon some other abode than that to which he had directed his course. Would he not say, I came in search of the blood-bought church, the love-cemented multitude; and do you mean to say that this is it? Is it for this divided, discordant church, the Son of God died upon the cross? Oh! where is the fruit of his agony, the answer of his prayer? Brethren, do we not deserve the rebuke? does not the reproach lie upon us? God helping us, we will put it away. But is it not true, that the bitter and thorny aloe of Christian contention is quite full blown upon the steps of the Christian temple? Is it not true, that the nettle and the bramble grow luxuriantly in its course? Is it not true, that birds of discordant notes utter their screams around? Well, thanks to Jehovah, we are beginning, I trust, to displace these plants of deformity, and to raise in their room the myrtle, the fir-tree, and the olive, from whence the voice of the turtle, the emblem of peace, shall be heard through the length and breadth of the land. So that ere long, if another visitant come to our world in search of the blood-bought multitude, the love-cemented church, we shall be able to present to him something that will not disappoint him, cause him to droop his wings, and to go back to his heaven with a dejected countenance.

II. Now, brethren, let us consider, secondly, one or two reasons, why the different denominations of evangelical Christians should exercise this love one towards another.

And, in the first place, is there not an agreement in our views of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity? Do we not hold the inspiration and the sufficiency of the Scriptures, the Divine Trinity of Persons in the essence of the Godhead, the incarnation of the Son of God, and the atonement and salvation of the world, the great Protestant doctrine of justification by faith, the regeneration and sanctification of the human soul by the Spirit, and the necessity of holiness as the evidence of real faith? What! shall I hold back from the Episcopalian who with me acknowledges the doctrine of the Trinity, because his views of church government differ from mine? Shall I refuse my hand to the Presbyterian because he thinks the church should be governed by elders, by the many, instead of each particular congregation being independent; while at the same time he believes the incarnation and atonement of Christ? Shall I refuse communion with my Methodist brethren, because they do not see with me in the doctrine of election, and the perseverance of the saints; while I see eye to eye with them on the doctrine of justification by faith and regeneration by the Spirit? Shall I scowl on the Baptist, because he refuses to receive children at the font; while at the same time he holds with me all the fundamental truths of Christianity? Brethren, if I retire from a man, because of a difference of minor importance, do not I disparage the grand principles of agreement and set the minor ones above them? If I do not hold communion with him, because we differ in small things, am I not thereby throwing discredit on the great and fundamental doctrines of God's blessed word?

But this is not all: the great evangelical body, in all its divisions, are agreed, secondly, in views of personal, vital, and experimental religion. Philosophers may be united on the principles of science, because science has no necessary connexion with the state of the heart, and does not necessarily depend for evidence on the state of the heart. But the doctrines of Christianity do; they are not like the *aurora borealis* floating in the pure regions of the atmosphere, but doing nothing for the fertilizing of the globe. The doctrines of the gospel are not like gems in a cabinet, deposited there for show, and not for use; they are all vital principles of action — means of sanctification. And, my dear Methodist brethren, here we are one. You and I agree most perfectly that no man is a Christian because he was born in a land so called; and that no man becomes a Christian by mere baptism. We hold together the religion of the affections; we hold the necessity of



“joy and peace in believing,” as the evidences of faith; we hold in common the witness of the Holy Spirit, either direct or indirect, or both; and therefore, in all the principles of experimental and vital religion, we are one, and are called upon, in the exercise of love, to “serve one another.”

Again: we are engaged in a common work, and through Divine grace are blessed with a common success. Yes; what are we about? Striving one and all to bring into execution the plans of the eternal mind, in reference to our world; to carry into application the death of the Son of God upon the cross; to fulfil the purpose for which the Spirit is poured out from on high, and the Scriptures are written. And we have all done something for this.

Brethren, I honor you. You have carried the lamp of salvation into almost every nook and dark corner of our land; you have covered the country with your chapels; your patriotism is seen in your piety — in what you are doing for the country. Then I turn my attention from home to foreign parts. You have aided to burst the manacles which fettered the slave, and to give liberty to a hundred thousand believers in the West Indies. In connexion with your Baptist brethren, and that illustrious man, whose name in your kindred society will to-morrow be mentioned in tones of grief and with tears of sorrow, you have done more; for you have given the liberty, wherewith Christ makes his people free, to these slaves, as they were once in the body. I view your progress in New Zealand, Polynesia, and South Africa, with gratitude and delight. I look upon that splendid blossom of missionary hope and prospect, your mission upon the Gold Coast of Western Africa. I turn to Ceylon, and to other parts of the world, and thank God for the tokens of his favor, which he has granted you there. We, brethren, have done something mighty; there is no room for jealousy — none for envy. And here, on the ground of common success, is a reason for our loving and serving one another. When Cowper, the poet of pathos and piety, was recovering from that direful malady under which he suffered from the hand of God, and in public worship was acknowledging his thankfulness to the Author of his mercy, in the same pew there sat with him an individual, whose heartfelt gratitude was overflowing in a hymn of praise, in which he seemed so heartily to join, that, says Cowper, “I could not help saying in my heart, bless you for praising him thus, whom I so much love.” I catch the sentiment, and I say to my Methodist brethren, bless you for all you have done for that dear Savior whom, without presumption, I dare affirm I love. And I doubt not, dear friends, that the response will come back from your



society to ours, and we shall bless one another, and God for each other, for what we are doing together.

III. Now, thirdly, I go on to consider in what kind of service we are to manifest our love to each other, as different denominations.

And here, my brethren, I advocate nothing latitudinarian ; I ask for no compromise ; for as long as denominational differences exist, there must be denominational preferences. And we love our denominations, because each of us deem them most accordant with the word of God, and there is the ground of our love to them. I am no advocate for that spurious philosophy, which sprung up some forty or fifty years ago, which proposed to build a system of universal benevolence upon the destruction of individual tenderness ; as if we could love the whole more, by loving each particular part of it less. The order of nature is to proceed from species to genus, from individual to generality, from that which is near to that which is remote. Every man, by taking care of his own soul first, is better prepared to take care of the souls of others ; he who looks well to his own family is contributing to the well-being of the country ; the farmer that takes care of distant fields is expected, first of all, to begin with his own ; and so we are expected, in our love to the universal church, to begin with that section of it to which we may each respectively belong. Therefore I ask for no relinquishment of attachment or attention to that particular part of the great family of God to which we belong ; but I ask, that we engage in all those exercises for each other, by which we can manifest our love, and serve each other without in the smallest degree injuring that part of the church with which we are more intimately connected.

And how shall we do this ? By purifying our controversies from all wrath, malice, uncharitableness and evil speaking ; by avoiding all misrepresentation of each other's sentiments, caricaturing each other's systems, or deducing from each other's principles inferences which we should repudiate with abhorrence ; by being careful not to exaggerate the points on which we differ, till we seem to make them of equal consequence with those on which we agree — which, to my idea, seems to be the very essence of sectarianism ; by doing nothing to each other which may lower us in public opinion ; by rooting out all the prejudices of education and of sect, by extinguishing all envy of each other's success ; by abstaining from all suspicion and doubt as to the sincerity of each other's motives ; by refraining from all underhand proselyting, and by not exposing each other's weaknesses ; and, may I now say, by embracing that discovery of modern charity, that what affects the whole affects each part, that what strengthens the body strengthens each

limb, and that what weakens that body, weakens each member. If Popery and Infidelity triumph, it is at the common expense of us all; if a cloud of reproach hang over the church of God generally, the cold, chilling and withering power of it will be felt by each of us. And what cloud is so dark, what is so withering, as the dissensions of the Christian church? Infidelity, like a vulture, scents the smell of battle from afar, directs her course to the field of conflict, and gorges and fattens on the blood of the combatants. Popery, like the witches and the wizards of the dark ages, carries on her incantations amidst the uproar of the elements, and the storms that are raging. Brethren, let us disappoint the appetite of the vulture, and the malice of the wizard; let us come closer to each other; let us come nearer and nearer, for our common defence and for our common sympathy. "Divide and conquer," is that watchword which was handed up from hell by Satan to his emissaries; "Unite and resist," is the counterword which heaven gives to us all. And then, brethren,—to make it bear upon the present object of our meeting, — "union is strength," inasmuch as the divided state of the Christian world appears to me to be one of the mightiest obstacles in existence to the conversion of the Redeemer's kingdom. God will not employ his church to bring on the millennium, till that church is more harmonious. We must be calm, dignified, tranquil, holy, peaceful, to be fit for the great work to which God has called us. He employs the graces, and not the furies, to fulfil his purposes of mercy to mankind. Like, then, the tribes of Israel, each bearing its own standard, but all collecting round the ark, let us move onward, all standing together under the cooling shadow of the cloudy pillar, and reflecting together the brilliant splendors of the fiery symbol that led the consecrated host through the wilderness. Depend upon it, a harmonized church must be the precursor of a converted world; and, to my eye, one of the brightest signs of the times, one of the most decisive marks that God is about to bless us all in advancing his cause on the earth is, that he is bringing us all nearer to each other.

But this is not all: we must serve each other by reciprocal help in pecuniary matters. Oh! say some, I cannot in conscience subscribe my money to a society that propagates what I consider to be error. I doubt, my brethren, this is rather the logic of the pocket, than of the conscience; because, upon the ground of the objector, I would say, you will admit there is more truth than there is error in this denomination which seeks your support; one part error, perhaps, and nineteen parts truth; and then, if you will not give your money to propagate error, you should give your money to propagate truth; and, surely, the nineteen parts have a greater claim upon your support than the

one part is repellent. Besides, the man that argues thus, should be quite sure that he is infallible, and that there is no subtle mixture of error in anything of his own; and few of us, I suppose, claim infallibility.

Then, again, let us "serve one another," by advocating each other's cause. Of all the sights in our divided, discordant world, there is scarcely any one more gratifying to me, than to see a semicircle of members and ministers of all denominations collected round the presidential chair of him who acts as the medium of our union and communion at a public meeting. Every missionary platform ought to be a communion-table, where all the followers of Christ should meet in the blessed fellowship and the sweet comfort of love. And what applies to the platform, applies equally to the pulpit. We should be always ready to advocate each other's missions; and angels must rejoice over every instance of this kind, as repelling the taunt of the infidel, and the scoff of the Papist, who in sarcasm tell us, that our missionary schemes are like many bubbles of enthusiasm, blown by bigots, followed by fools, and that they will explode by the expansive force of their own absurdity; mere schemes of selfishness, to set up our denominations in different parts of the world, to the neglect or opposition of others. Foul spirits of darkness, you lie. Our object is not sectarian, but Christian; and all of us have been the happy instruments of converting myriads of men and women "from the error of their ways," and translating them with robes washed white and clean in the blood of the Lamb, to the kingdom of our Father. We know to-night—we feel it, and we exhibit it—"how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity."

But now, brethren, permit me to advance a few motives for this reciprocal exercise of love and service.

And, in the first place, as a motive to "love" and "serve one another," I mention, that in doing so, we serve one common master. Who is that? Not Wesley, Whitfield, Calvin, or Luther, but that dear friend of sinners, before whose throne they are casting down their crowns at this moment, and would have us cast down ours. Yes, we go to exhibit the mighty magnet of the cross, and draw men to Christ, that we may make men Christians. Yes, Christian is their surname, whatever baptismal name we give them in addition. We go to carry together—(is it not so?)—the ark of the covenant into the dark realms of Paganism on the one hand, and of Mahometanism on the other. We go on, bearing the sacred vessel, responsively singing, as we bear it onward, "The world for Christ!" Angels catch the sound, and respond, "The world for Christ!" Devils, in despair, groan



forth the echo, "The world for Christ!" God, in the purpose of his power and of his mercy, seals the decree, and says, "The world for Christ." In serving one another, then, we serve Christ.

Secondly, in serving one another, we accomplish the same great object. And what is that object? Not, brethren, to turn men from one set of opinions to another, without turning them to God; not getting them to renounce the ceremonies of one religion to take up the ceremonies of another religion, without worshipping God in the spirit, and serving Christ Jesus, and having "no confidence in the flesh." This would not be worth our pains, nor the money we have been expending. No, brethren, our object is to turn men to God; and therefore, whoever serves another serves himself, so far as the accomplishment of his object is concerned.

Again: we employ the same means. What are these? Education for the children, preaching for the adults, fellowship for the converts. No crucifixes, no relics, no trumpery of Popery, no jesuitical tricks, no Romish ceremonies, no holy water, no baptizing children stealthily, no smuggling in priests under the disguise of carpenters, no ships of war, no steamers bearing cannon, no grape-shot fired upon poor defenceless women and children, no Tahitian bloodshed, perfidy and treachery; we leave these things to Popery, it is worthy of them, and they of it. We carry God's blessed Word. We send the truth by men who understand and feel it — who appeal to the understanding; to the intellect by reasoning, to the heart by persuasion, to the conscience by all the force of those great motives which are evolved in the truth. We go to evangelize, and to bring civilization in its train. Brethren, we do all this; and therefore these are motives to "serve one another." Our means are alike. We carry not the edicts of monarchs, the decrees of councils, the traditions of men; we carry not the institutes of fellow-creatures as the supreme authority; we go to make the Bible the book of the world even as it was given to the world, we go under the warrant of the command of Jesus Christ to "preach the gospel to every creature," and guide our conduct in all things by the acts of the apostles. And therefore there is no reason for suspecting each other; none for standing aloof. We may compare our prospects, the most secret as well as the most public, and we shall find that as honest men we can "serve one another," for we are pursuing the same object under the same means.

I have only one thing more; and that is, we anticipate the same result. Very few of us are wholly taken up with the idea, though in our musings we may dwell upon the subject, that our denomination is to be the religion of the millennium. Perhaps, my brethren, God may



intend to take us all to pieces, and make none of our religions exactly that of the latter-day glory, but bring out a new and a more perfect system than any of us have yet attained to. But without troubling ourselves as to what denomination is to prevail in the latter-day glory, it is enough for us to know that there is to be a latter-day glory — that there is to be a millennium, in which Christianity shall cover the earth in its purest and brightest form. And the man who in the foresight of the downfall of Popery, Paganism, Mahometanism, Judaism and Infidelity, and the raising up of Christianity upon their ruins, holds his heart in abeyance till he has ascertained, if he can, whether it is his denomination that is to prevail, — who, in imagination listening to the shouts of a renovated world, while heaven and earth are responding to each other, “Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!” determines not to echo the song till he can ascertain whether it is raised by Methodist, or Episcopalian, or Presbyterian, or Congregational voices, or he who watches “the new heavens and the new earth” emerging out of the moral chaos of our world, refuses to rejoice before he has ascertained whether his party is then to be dominant, may be a sectarian, but he cannot be a Christian.

Friends of Immanuel, friends of your species, friends of your Bible, in the hope and the prospect of our regenerated, redeemed world, in which, under the peaceful sceptre of Jesus, the earth shall be delivered from slavery, from tyranny, and from war, — when commerce shall be purified from its stupidity, literature from its pride, and philosophy from its scepticism; do not stand calculating or conjecturing who are to do this, and how it is to be accomplished! Brethren, we are all to do it, and God will honor us all; and when our world shall be illuminated, and the latter-day glory shall come, and the light of heaven shall spread over the earth, it will, perhaps, be as impossible to say who has done most to accomplish this, as it is to say which of those gas lights has thrown most splendor around us this evening. Here they are — all illuminating the place together. And so will it be with respect to the glory of that period to which our attention is now directed; we shall all be honored of God to do something to bring it on, and shall praise him on that day, not only for what we have done, but for what others have done. And the man that hushes the groans of creation, and spreads over our desolate earth the verdure of moral vegetation, shall have my hand, my heart, my prayer, my adoring praise and gratitude to God, however I may differ from him on the subject of church government, the ordinances of religion, or some of the minor parts of Christianity. In the prospect of the millennium, in which “the knowledge of the Lord is to cover the earth as the waters

cover the channel of the sea," I see enough to rejoice in, without staying to ask who has done most to accomplish it, or whose opinions will then most widely prevail.

My beloved and honored brethren in the ministry, of every name and denomination that may be present here this evening, bear with me while I give utterance, not indeed to the responses of oracular wisdom, or to the counsels of patriarchal authority, but to the effusions of a brother's heart, anxious for your success and for his own. If Christians are to be "the light of the world," we are to be the light of the Church. If the Church is to be "the salt of the earth," we are to be the salt of the Church. Our influence, I say, — although I seem to magnify my office, but not myself — is great, and our responsibility proportionate. We cannot be negative characters. The pulpit, raised as it is between the law on the one hand and the gospel on the other, is the very centre of the moral universe, and all the world will feel its influence, and feel it through all the ages of eternity. There is a mighty power in this ministerial and pastoral character, more than even in books. Here are the

"Thoughts that breathe and words that burn."

The minister in earnest awes by the thunder of his sermon, delights by its music, or kindles by its enthusiasm the souls of those who hear it. There is an addition of all that influence which we carry with us in the private circle, where a single remark may be the means of starting an immortal soul on a career of glory, never to end for ever and ever; or may sink that soul down to the bottomless pit. Oh! let us consider how much the harmony of the Church, the conversion of the world depends upon us! In one sense, though in a very different one to that which Tractarian theology contends for, we are the channels through which the blessing of God descends to the Church and to the world. Oh! let us take care how we choke those channels by indolence, negligence, or carelessness, and that we keep them open by ministerial zeal, fidelity and holiness. Immortal souls, for their eternal destinies, hang upon our hands: we, in reference to the world, retard or accelerate the millennial glory. Oh! let us then, in these eventful days, look up to God, by fasting and prayer, that we be not found wanting at our post! Considerable stir has been made of late about the rising ministry, but oh! my venerable fathers in Christ, is it not true that we on whom the snows of winter are descended, who have had so much more time to study the worth of souls, the value of divine truth, the importance of salvation, the terror of damnation, and the life of eternity, are more wanting even than some of our younger

brethren. Oh! that God would help us all, younger or older, to consider how much the tone and temper of the Church depend upon us — how much we have it in our power to bring Christians closer to each other, or to repel them to a wider distance! May we all consider, that God will hold us responsible for what we do, for the Church and for the world! Upon us hang the interests of our Master, which will flourish or decay as we appeal to the minds and hearts and consciences of our people. May God lead us to meditate upon these tremendous truths; for sometimes it does appear to me wonderful, that with such interests hanging upon us, we can be so light-hearted, or that we can find any rest upon our beds, when such interests are dependent upon us. May the Lord God grant that we may be found faithful — kindling the purest and the brightest zeal in the souls of our hearers, and aiding onward, as our duty, our honor, and our privilege is, the triumphal car of the Redeemer, who is going forth “conquering and to conquer!”

Brethren, what need I say to you on the subject of your missions? As to their nature, their importance, their extent, and at the same time their claims, you know all this better than I do. God has greatly honored and blessed you. Without one particle of envy, without a single feeling but that of gratulation and thankfulness, I think of your more than £100,000 a-year, for the support of your missions. I can only stand and wonder and adore. You leave us far behind. We wish that we were up with you, but we do not for a moment regret that you are blessed of God to the extent of your liberality. Go on and prosper. You have missions of which any denomination under the sun might, (I will not say be proud) but for which any one, and every one might be thankful. To whatever part of the vast field I turn my eyes, I see every thing which should be felt by you as a motive and stimulus to greater zeal. Look at the West Indies, where you began; what wonders has the Lord achieved by you there! Look at Ceylon; how many, in that eastern part of the world, have you turned from following dumb idols to serve the living and true God! Look at your more modern missions of Polynesia; look at New Zealand; look at the Fejees; in all those spots of God's world you see motives for thankfulness and increased zeal. May the Lord bless you in your mission to Africa; may you be the honored instruments of carrying the gospel of mercy into those regions that “are full of the habitations of cruelty!” There plant the standard of the cross, amidst those pyramids of human skulls, and other marks of ferocity, which have troubled the feelings and inspired the zeal of your missionaries. Go on, brethren; you have reached a pitch which might lead any body to

suppose that it needs no stimulus, and admits of no increase; but the Methodist body will repudiate the idea of not looking for any increase. It would be as bold an attempt for any man to fix the *ne plus ultra* of Methodist zeal as it would be to fix the *ne plus ultra* of scientific research and attainment. Halt, is not a word which your leaders are accustomed to give to those who follow them; to retrograde is not a motion which their followers are accustomed to make. Onward! is the cry. Your missionaries abroad give the sound, and friends at home echo it here. Brethren, perhaps it will startle you when I say, that you could, if you would, raise another £100,000 to that which you have raised. Oh! go forward, that we, peradventure, may have our zeal kindled and warmed by you.

There are four questions, which in conclusion, I would put to you—*may* you not do more — *can* you not do more — *ought* you not to do more — and *will* you not do more?

*May* you not, when the world is all before you, and Providence your God; when there is no limit, but that which your means impose upon your efforts; when doors are opening in every part of the world, and voices from heaven and the earth are saying, “Come and help us?” Go and help them. You *can* do more. Where is the man, except he be among the poorest in society, who will rise and say, with all his luxuries or comforts that Providence has bestowed upon him, that he can do no more? *Can* is a mighty word, and *cannot* is a fearful one for any man to utter in reference to duty. What you can do, ought you not to do? Can the word *ought* be measured by any other limit than the word *can*? What you *ought* to do, that *will* you not do? Men are afraid of that word *will*, as if it belonged only to Omnipotence, and was the fiat of the Creator. Brethren, it is a lawful word; we find it in the Scripture; and let every man say, By God’s grace I *will* do what I *ought* to do. I *ought* to do what I *can* do, and from this hour I will study the meaning, and act under the potency of the questions that have been submitted this night to me.

Brethren, I have done. I throw this offering upon the altar of your cause, with one regret — and only one — that it is not more worthy of the cause of the people of God I have come here to-night to advocate.



## S E R M O N I X .

THE GREAT THEME OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

BY JABEZ BURNS, D. D.

" For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

1 CORINTHIANS, ii. 2.

THE apostle Paul was eminently a man of one subject, and that subject was Christ; Christ in his person, work, offices and glory. He made this evident by his preaching, for immediately after the record of his conversion, it is added, " And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." — Acts ix. 20. This too was his theme at Antioch, in Iconium, to the jailer and others at Philippi, at Corinth, and in Thessalonica. Before the apostle finished his eloquent oration to the Athenians, he announced the doctrine of the resurrection, and the judgment of the world by Christ Jesus. — Acts xvii. 31. In harmony with these statements was the apostle's noble avowal, that if he visited imperial Rome, he would go unto them in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. Not only do we see the apostle's one subject from the topics of his constant preaching, but also from the uniform tenor of his epistles. Hence, writing to the church at Colosse, he refers to Christ, in them, the hope of glory, whom, says he, " we preach." To the Philippians he declares that he " accounted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord." He declared to the brethren in Galatia, that he would not glory in any thing, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. So when he wrote his second letter to the Corinthians, he observes with peculiar emphasis, " We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." So in the striking language of the text: " For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Probably the idea of the apostle was, that in his search after knowledge, he would devote his chief thoughts and time to know more and more of the Savior, and that as an apostle commissioned to preach to a perishing world, he would make the Lord Jesus and his cross the great theme of his ministry. Noble resolution! — Evangelical averment! Worthy of him who had been so marvellously converted by the grace of Christ, and who was destined to be one of the chiefest of the apostles. But the resolution of Paul is worthy of every Christian minister. Though this subject was the grand theme of the apostles and early preachers of the gospel, it is still as fresh

and rich and all-essential as ever. Let us then endeavor to define and illustrate the resolve of the apostle, and then ascertain if it be capable of vindication. Let us,

#### I. DEFINE AND ILLUSTRATE THE RESOLVE OF THE APOSTLE.

1. *He could not mean absolutely that he would not preach on any other subject.* For he did preach on the being and majesty of the Godhead, and his infinitely blessed perfections. He did preach on the wonders of creation, and the wisdom and bounty of divine providence. He did preach on the fall of man; and on human depravity, and man's utter helplessness and misery. He did preach the moral excellency of the law, and its design, as our school-master, to bring us to Christ. He did preach the doctrines of repentance, and obedient conformity to the will of God. He did preach the graces and virtues of the Christian character, and entire holiness of heart and life. He did preach on death and judgment and eternity, on the joys of heaven, and the terrors of the wrath to come. It is clear, also,

2. *That he did not mean to confine himself only to the great fact of Christ's crucifixion.* His language is, "Christ, and him crucified." Hence we find that he dwelt largely on the Savior's Godhead and divine glory. He insisted on the sinlessness of his humanity. On his resplendent and unparalleled miracles. His teaching. His obedience unto the death. His ascension and perpetual intercession. His regal glory and second coming. But he obviously designed,

3. *To make the crucified Redeemer the grand leading theme of his public ministrations.* He would dwell on this principally. That the facts and doctrines of the cross should never hold a subordinate, but the chief place in his discourse. That this should be the Alpha and Omega of his sermons. The great Sun and Centre around which all other truths should revolve. That Christ crucified should be the one foundation on which he would endeavor to build the whole structure of the Christian system. That this should be the essential feature, the very life of that gospel he would publish to the world. Hence he writes unto the Corinthian brethren, towards the conclusion of this epistle, "For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." — 1 Cor. xv. 3. The resolve in the text evidently implies,

4. *That Christ crucified should be declared as the only hope of the perishing sinner.* He would make known this truth at all times and to all men. He made it evident that he pointed the apostate, ruined sinner only to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world. He made known no other way of escape from the wrath to come. He de-

lighted to declare that it was a "faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." That he "had tasted death for every man," and "gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." O yes, these were the truths in connection with Christ's crucifixion the apostle rejoiced to proclaim. It was his work and life to point the dying sinner to the cross of Christ. He doubtless intended,

5. *That he would make all other subjects to harmonize with this, and to terminate in it.* For instance, he showed how both the moral and ceremonial law were inefficient to save the transgressor, and that the cross only could do what neither the one, nor both of them could effect. He discoursed, too, on Jewish history, that he might explain the meaning of the various types and ceremonies of that people, as being elucidated and embodied in Christ. That Jesus was the true passover sacrificed for us. That he was the real bread of life which came down from heaven. The blessed rock from which gushed forth the waters of life for a perishing world. The apostle also often quoted from the writings of the prophets, but here also he never lost sight of his one grand subject. He made it evident that Christ was the sum and substance of prophecy, that to him bare all the prophets witness. That Christ was the illustrious personage of whom Moses in the law and the prophets had written. See also 1 Peter i. 10—12. Thus the apostle made Christ and his cross both the great centre and end of his ministry. But the declaration of the text also included the idea that the apostle would,

6. *Refer to all the momentous aspects and phases of Christ's crucifixion.* In this he would dwell on the death of Christ, — (1) As the work of Jewish unbelief and malevolence, by which as a nation they had filled up the cup of their iniquity. They had often sinned against God by the rejection of his counsels, and the persecution of the prophets. God had sent various of his servants unto them, but they had despised their message and put them to death. At length he said, I will send unto them my Son, for they will reverence him. But when Christ appeared in their midst, they said this is the heir, let us kill him. Hence they rejected his gracious word and despised the annunciations of his love. Though he did such works and ratified his truth by such signs as none other had ever done, yet they despised him, maltreated him, thirsted with bitterest hate and envy for his blood, and at length, with the most atrocious wickedness, they put him to a cruel and ignominious death. And so intent were they on this deed of unheard-of baseness and violence, that they publicly preferred the release of Barabbas to Jesus, and even announced to the world

their cheerful readiness that the blood of Christ should be upon them and upon their children. Peter did not fail with the utmost fidelity to charge them with having, by wicked hands, crucified and slain their own Messiah, the Son of God.—Acts ii. 22, 23. How the imprecation they uttered in reference to the blood of Christ has been fulfilled! How it has rested on their unbelieving posterity to this day! But the apostle, while he would show that the crucifixion of Christ was an act of unparalleled wickedness, yet he would also dwell on the important truth that it was, (2) The execution of God's own design in his purposes of grace towards our world. Hence Peter, in the passage we have partially quoted, adds, "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken," &c. Hence the apostle often dwelt on the divine intentions in reference to the redemption of mankind, and on the wisdom and power by which all events were controlled in reference to this consummation. God laid the foundation of his merciful designs before time began to roll, and he overruled the voluntary wickedness of the Jews for their accomplishment. He would declare Christ crucified, (3) As an act of unexampled love and grace on the part of the Lord Jesus. It was infinite compassion and love which prompted the Savior to undertake the achievement of our redemption. It was this love that constrained him to assume our humanity, and though he was rich, yet caused him for our sakes to become poor. And how poor, what tongue can declare! It was this love that was embodied in his incarnate state, that was uttered in all his gracious discourses, exhibited in all his merciful miracles, that shone with such pure and gentle radiance in all his actions. It was this that led him to endure scorn and reproach, that made him submissive to keenest suffering, that caused him to drink the bitter un-mixed cup in Gethsemane, and to be bathed in blood, while prostrated in the garden, the scene of his agony. It was love that led him to suffer the indignities of his base mock trial, and to expire in unutterable pain and ignominy on the accursed tree. A greater evidence of love he could not display than by laying down his life for us. Hence the cross was the grand climacterical display of the love of Christ to a guilty world. Love, deep, intense, infinite, unsearchable! In Christ crucified was thus proclaimed in unmistakable language the immeasurable riches of his grace. But the cross too was designed, (4) As an exposition of the benevolence of God. Often have both theologians and poets done dishonor to the Father by teaching that he was rendered propitious and merciful through the work of the Son. That he sat upon his throne arrayed in habiliments of flaming wrath. That he was intent on the eternal ruin of the guilty transgressor, but that the



Son, more pitiful and compassionate, interposed, and thus moved God, by his propitious engagements, to clemency and love. Nothing can give a more false and dishonorable view of the divine character than such representations. Such views are at utter variance with the teachings of Christ himself, and altogether irreconcilable with the scheme of the gospel. Jesus declares that "God so loved the world that he gave his Son;" hence the gift of Christ was the evidence, the effect of his own original, pure and spontaneous love. Christ did not come to obtain his clemency, but to publish and demonstrate it. He came as the grand, living fact of God's intense love toward us—and greater love even Deity could not evince than in not withholding his own Son, but delivering him up for us all. God had shown his regards towards us in the gifts of nature and in the bounties of Providence, but he never gave so bright and so glorious an evidence of it, as in the crucifixion of his beloved Son. But by declaring Christ and him crucified, the apostle would further dwell, (5) On the extreme evil and malignity of sin, and the spotless holiness of God. God had often declared his utter detestation of all sin. In the sentence passed on our first parents, and in their expulsion from paradise. In the evils which immediately flowed from man's transgression. The groaning sterile earth, the diseases of the body, the agonies of death and the triumphs of the grave. He had declared his abhorrence of moral evil in the law given on Sinai, under circumstances of peculiar majesty and grandeur. A grandeur so awful and overwhelming that even Moses, with holy alarm, exclaimed, "I exceedingly fear and quake;"—but the clearest manifestations of sin's heinousness and extreme turpitude was reserved for the cross, when God's own Son should expire under peculiar circumstances of grief and pain and ignominy, as the only sacrifice by which atonement could be made, and through which alone the sinner could be saved from it. Even hell, with its darkness and wailing and horror and endless blackness and despair, offers not so striking a declaration of the infinite evil of sin, as is seen in the crucifixion of the holy and ever-blessed Son of God. God here declared in terms which it is impossible to mistake, that sin was so desperately evil and so entirely contrary to his holy nature, and righteous laws, and equitable government, that it could only be effaced by the offering up as the great sacrifice, the Lord of life and Prince of Glory. How appropriate then that declaration, that we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace. Such then were some of the striking phases under which the apostle would contemplate the crucifixion of Christ, and the truths he would announce in connection with it. No marvel that he should resolve to

know nothing among men, but the great, profound and comprehensive subject of Jesus Christ and him crucified.

We inquire, then,

## II. IF THIS AVOWAL IS CAPABLE OF VINDICATION.

This avowal we conceive to have formed the very glory of Paul's apostleship. No higher resolve could he have adopted. No holier or nobler averment could he have declared. Various are the weighty reasons on which a successful vindication of the apostle might be grounded. We must be content to notice two or three. The apostle's avowal was worthy of himself and the gospel he preached, —

1. *Because in the facts and doctrines of Christ's crucifixion was presented a true system of religion in opposition to the multifarious schemes of earthly philosophy.* Long before the apostle preached the gospel, philosophers of various countries had published the principles of their diversified systems of ethics and religion. Hence men had not wanted for instruction, such as it was, on the subject of the soul and its innate longings for happiness. But ancient philosophy was only like the feeble, flickering light of the expiring lamp, and there was no clearness in its revelations nor certainty in its enunciation. One system was in direct opposition to another, and their lying oracles never uttered, but in dark and uncertain sound. The great teachers of these systems were not agreed on one point of any importance in relation to the lofty aspiration and high hopes of immortal beings. They were not agreed even as to the divine existence. "For the world by wisdom knew not God." Some of them taught that there were two gods, one the patron of evil and the other of good. One to be the object of dread, the other of confidence and love. Most of these teachers rather believed in a multitude of gods, and were given up to the gross superstitions by which they were surrounded. They were not agreed as to the real nature of moral evil. The vices of some were the virtues of others. They could not agree as to the true character of the chief good. Some taught that it consisted in pleasure, one party applying the term to sensual, the other to mental gratification. Others, that it consisted in obtaining to perfect stoicism and indifference to all pleasure and pain. They had only feeble and uncertain guesses as to the future. They had their misgivings as well as their hopes, in reference to the soul's immortality. And of the resurrection of the body they had not the smallest possible conception. How true of them, destitute of the light of divine truth, "that they wandered in endless mazes lost." They were like the perplexed and

alarmed mariner without compass or chart, in the midst of the dark and blighting mist. But Paul rejoiced that in connexion with the cross was a true, clear and blessed system of religion adapted to all the hopes and desires of the immortal mind. Hence, in preaching Christ, he called the attention of men to the Sun of righteousness which had arisen on the world, bringing celestial light and joy to a bewildered race. Here was the true and great teacher, who had solved all difficult problems, and answered all the important inquiries of the human mind. Here was a new system of ethics and worship, full of holy lustre and moral beauty. Here vice was truly depicted, and virtue distinctly revealed. Here the true God was made known in all the grandeur of his perfections. Here the chief good was positively exhibited. The way of happiness written as with a sun-beam, and life and immortality brought to light by the gospel. Here the eternal world was unveiled, and the glories of heaven and the horrors of hell presented for the contemplation of men. In one word, here was a system of pure and certain and harmonious truth, worthy of the acceptance of intellectual and undying beings, and of this system the cross of Christ was the immovable basis, and the grand centre. But the apostle's avowal may be vindicated on the ground,

2. *That in Christ and him crucified was contained the body and reality of the Jewish ceremonial.* Judaism, in contradistinction to pagan philosophy, was a divine institution, which originated with God, and reflected his truth and glory. But it was evident that it was only local in its character and of transitory duration. It was but the figure or type of a better and more enduring dispensation. All its services and sacrifices and rites were shadows of good things to come. It only required candor in the Jew to discern that Christ was the end of the whole ceremonial institution, the body of all their shadows, the object distinctly recognized in all their types. He was the true paschal lamb. The real sacrifice for sins. The one great offering for the people. The teacher and prophet like unto Moses, unto whom the people should hearken. That the tabernacle with its altar, the holiest of all with its furniture, the priesthood with its services, all pointed to Christ, and all terminated their labors in him. Here, then, the apostle preached the very system of saving religion, which God had been pre-figuring from the time of Moses, the goodly land of which Canaan itself but feebly typified. And hence the apostle resolved to present this system to the inquiring, anxious Jew; in all its divinity and adaptation to his moral necessities. Hence exclaims the apostle, "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which believe, Christ the



power of God, and Christ the wisdom of God." 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. But we vindicate the apostle's avowal,

3. *As Christ crucified was to be the great moral attraction of our perishing species.* Jesus himself had declared, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." These words of the blessed Savior had especial reference to the manner of his death. Hence Paul knew experimentally the influence of the cross in subduing the enmity of the heart, and bringing the conscience into reconciliation with God. Paul knew the power of the cross in destroying the dominion of sin, and in bringing all the deep emotions of the soul into a state of holy and obedient love. Besides, the apostle realized in Christ crucified all that man, in his fallen and miserable condition, could possibly need. Did man under a sense of heavy guilt sigh for pardon, he declared that "through this man is preached forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses." Acts xiii. 38, 39. Did man feel the misery of his polluted state and desire holiness, he could announce that a fountain had been opened for sin and uncleanness, and that the blood of Christ, God's Son, cleansed from all sin. Was man tortured with the anguish of a distracted conscience, the apostle would appeal to the same cross, and by it preach peace to them that were near, and to them that were afar off. Were men in circumstances of dread when contemplating death and the grave and eternity, he would show that the light of the cross irradiated the sombre tomb, and opened a brilliant pathway to eternal glory. Hence, also, he connected the cross of Christ with the gift of eternal life to all believers. What good reason had he then to resolve not to know anything among men, save Jesus Christ and him crucified? But the apostle not only knew the influence of the death of Christ personally, but he also knew that by its inherent energy it was to subvert and overthrow the empire of sin, and build up to entire completion the kingdom of grace among men. Hence with holy triumph he exclaimed, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place." 2 Cor. ii. 14. Paul had confidence that the power of the cross would overthrow Paganism, with all its multifarious, cruel and horrid rites, and Judaism, notwithstanding the existing prejudices against Christ and his holy gospel. Then he knew well that the cross and the universal dominion of Christ over all flesh were essentially connected, and that by the virtues of Calvary Jesus should reign from the rising to the setting of the sun. Hence this view of Christ's mediatorial work and glory had been asserted by the prophet Isaiah, who in connection with predictions of



the Messiah's sufferings and death, had also prophesied as the final result, that "he should see his seed, prolong his days, and that the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand. That he should see the travail of his soul and be satisfied." Isa. liii. 10, 11. And with these sentiments harmonized the declaration of the apostle in his letter to the Philippians, — "Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men : and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name ; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Here, then, we learn on what the hope of our world's renovation rests, and the means for its accomplishment. All, all is to be effected by the power of that gospel whose glorious principles are concentrated in Jesus Christ and him crucified. We have yet to contend with the superstitions and cruel and polluted rites of heathenism, but we trust in the doctrine of Christ crucified for the overthrow of every pagan temple, and the utter extirpation of idolatry from the world. We rely on this for the annihilation of the Mahomedan imposture, the religion of the beast, and know that the crescent must fall and pass away before the glory and power of the cross. And this doctrine, too, must uproot the superstitions of Romanism, and the mere crucifix and Maryism shall perish before the mighty influence of the truth as it is in Jesus. And scepticism and profligacy and worldliness, with every form of moral evil, shall be exiled from our world by the effulgent glory and celestial majesty of the gospel of Christ. We despise not the progress of science and philosophy ; we do not underrate the value of learning, and the spread of literature ; we cannot be indifferent to the various important benevolent institutions of our times, but on none of them can we rest for the world's deliverance from error and guilt. Our only hope clings to the faithful and extended promulgation of the doctrine of Christ and him crucified. O yes, the light and saving influence of Calvary are powerfully working for the restoration of our world from debasement, sin and death, to a state of universal dignity, holiness and bliss.

And now what are the important lessons we derive from this subject ? We see,

1. *What is the very essence and glory of the gospel.* It is the great fact of Christ's death as an atoning sacrifice for the sin of the world.

It is true that he both lived and died as an illustrious example of holy obedience and resignation to the will of God. That he died to confirm with his dying breath and his flowing blood the great truths which he had taught, and the celestial principles of his kingdom. But it is an essential truth, that he died to redeem us to God. That he suffered the just, for us the unjust, to bring us to the enjoyment of the Divine favor and everlasting life. That he bore in his own body our sins upon the tree. And that now God may, in the exercise of the most rigid equity, be manifested both as the just God and yet the Savior. And now in Christ's name may be preached to every fallen child of man, repentance and remission of sins. Men may now return to God, because he hath redeemed them, and redeemed them not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the "precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." 1 Peter i. 18, 19. The exclusion of this great subject, or giving it an inferior place in the gospel system, is virtually the withholding or enshrouding the brightest and sweetest rays of gospel glory. We learn,

2. *What should still be the chief topic of pulpit ministration.* It is "Jesus Christ and him crucified." This should be the constant and not the merely occasional theme. This should be the precious golden thread running through the whole web of our discourses. It is vitally connected with every doctrine, with every blessing, with every privilege, with every duty of Christianity. It is the very heart and spirit of evangelical preaching. For this there is no substitute. When this is wanting, the cardinal principle is wanting. No embellishments of rhetoric, no style of composition, no beauty of thought, no grandeur of idea, no energy of expression, can make up for this. All without this is the chiseled form, and it must be cold and without life. It is the painted representation, but it is nothing after all but canvass and coloring applied with the touch of a human hand, the glory and the divinity are wanting. Sermons without this may be chaste or elegant, they may be startling or eloquent, but evangelical and Christian they are not. No, the resolve of the man who feels the power of the truth on his own heart, and who longs to bring the same power to bear on the hearts of others, must be that of the apostle, "For I am determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." We learn from this,

3. *The probable main cause of the apparent extensive failure as to the success of preaching.* It is possible for men to retain an honorable character for being evangelical, while Christ and his cross are subordi-

nate themes in their ministry. And if the gospel only is the power of God unto salvation, and Christ crucified is the very power of that gospel, how can such preaching be effective when that theme is not always in the ascendant. Let it not be imagined that it is essential to this that certain phrases must always be in use or a certain monotonous mode observed in the discussion of pulpit discourses, but rather that the spirit of the cross should imbue the minister's heart on every occasion. This theme alone can bring the love of God, in all its omnipotent influence, to bear on the human heart, and we know of nothing else that can soften and renew it. How careful we should be, that as preachers we are not diverted from the doctrine of Jesus Christ and him crucified. Oh, let us preach him always, and with all our hearts, and then we may confidently expect that God will crown our labors with eminent success. Blessed be God, the cross has lost none of its saving virtue. It is still the grand catholicon for all the ills and woes which affect our common humanity. We inquire,

4. *What personal interest and acquaintance have you with this great subject?* You may hear of Christ crucified and not spiritually understand it. Or you may understand it in its doctrinal bearing, and yet be strangers to its saving power. You may often hear of the cross, and yet live at a great moral distance from it. You may even love to listen to evangelical truth, and yet be the slaves of error and unbelief. Even a profession of attachment to the cross may be made, and yet in works you may deny him. Brethren, how is it with you? Have you so contemplated Jesus Christ and him crucified that you can confidently say, "He loved me and hath given himself for me?" Has Christ been formed in your hearts the hope of glory? By the cross have you obtained peace and joy in the Holy Ghost? Here have you found rest to your wearied soul, and a good hope through grace? Do you revere the cross, glory in it, and by it has the world been crucified to you and you to the world? Are the sacred interests of the cross yours, and so yours, that you live constantly under their constraining influence? Are you living to advance its peaceful and joyous triumphs? Does it cheer you in sorrow, strengthen you in trouble, is it your hope in death, will you trust only and entirely to it when you shall plunge into the swellings of Jordan? Will your hope and love to the cross bear you up, when the world is on fire — and when the Savior comes in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory? Brethren, an experimental knowledge of Christ and him crucified is our only blessedness in this world, and can be our only song and joy forever.

And now, in conclusion, let it be our first concern to know really and savingly for ourselves, Jesus Christ and him crucified, and then let it

be the great end of our lives to promote to the utmost of our ability the knowledge of that blessed subject among others. For this is life eternal, to know the true God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. Amen.

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## SERMON X.

### THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST.

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BY J. E. BEAUMONT, M. D.

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“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.”—Acts 11. 22, 23.

IF there be joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth, what must be the joy of that minister who on good grounds has reason to conclude, that by the instrumentality of his ministrations the kingdom of heaven has been opened to a multitude of perishing sinners? That joy of all joys is the highest, the deepest, the richest, and the strongest. Such was Peter's joy upon the day of Pentecost.

He who enters on the work of the ministry, enters into tribulation. When Peter was appointed to the ministry, to the apostleship, he was appointed to martyrdom. He that said to Peter, “Feed my sheep, feed my lambs,” said also unto him, “When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.” Peter's ministration was a scene of glory, but it was a scene of tribulation; it was contested all along its course with the fiercest and the most virulent opposition; but God gave him to taste at its outset the sweetest joy that a minister can taste, and so prepared him for the bitternesses that were to come.

The first sermon, the very first sermon, that Peter preached, was with the Holy Ghost and with power. My text is a part of it. You know the simplicity of his manner, the order and power of his argument, the force and majesty of his eloquence,—and oh, how successful was that first sermon! Peter brought home to his hearers the guilt which they had contracted; he set before them Jesus Christ cru-



cified *by* them — ah! and *for* them as well as by them; and that sermon at once captivated three thousand hearts — three thousand were pricked to the heart, believed, and were added unto the Lord. Our God is in the heavens, and still our Jesus reigns. We that preach in this day, are sometimes tempted to inquire, “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” but our God is in the heavens, and still our Jesus reigns, and “with him is the residue of the Spirit.” May he pour it out on this congregation! May the arm of the Lord our God be made bare amongst us to-night! I bring you no new gospel; I rejoice that I preach to those, mainly so at least, this evening, who have been accustomed to the burden of my ministry, and who know that I have nothing else to preach but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. “Hear these words, then, ye men of Israel,” and be thankful that ye have to hear them, not in hell, but on earth where the gospel is preached. “Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs,” said Peter unto the people to whom he preached, “which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.”

Now, there are FOUR inquiries to which I shall endeavor to direct your attention from these words. *First*, Who was delivered? “Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God.” *Secondly*, To what was he delivered? Crucifixion; “Ye crucified him.” *Thirdly*, By whom was he thus delivered? “By the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, and by your wicked hands and hearts.” *Fourthly and lastly*, The design on account of, and the end for which, Jesus of Nazareth was delivered: “for us men, and for our salvation.” May God the Holy Spirit assist me to preach, and you to hear!

#### I. WHO WAS DELIVERED? Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus of Nazareth had at once a name of ignominy and a name of renown; a name of scandal and a name of glory. Jesus of Nazareth, or as it is in the original, *Jesus the Nazarene* — called a Nazarene in Scripture because he was devoted unto God — called a Nazarene by the Jews because he was brought up at Nazareth; and they availed themselves of that fact in his earliest history, to fasten upon him what they thought would be an indelible stigma. “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus is a name of glory. It was, indeed, a human name, a common name: it was borne by many, as we read in history, before it was applied to him who was born of a virgin; but when it was once put on him who was born of the virgin in Bethlehem, it never was put on

any other. You do not hesitate to call your children by the names of the apostles, always excepting the name of Judas — for what father could bear to have a son called by the name of Judas? The name that had been an honorable name, was by the fact of the conduct of him that betrayed the Son of man with a kiss, blighted, blasted, and withered away. But the name of Jesus, which had been a human name, a common name, before it was put upon him born of a virgin, when once it was put upon him became a divine name, a superhuman name, and no father dares to call his son Jesus, because God has called his Son Jesus.

“ This is the name to sinners dear,  
This is the name to sinners given.”

This is a name above every name, Jesus of Nazareth ; he saves us by the power of his cross, by the glory of his throne.

We observe, that the particular feature of his character here developed in the text, is, the power of working miracles. “ Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by *miracles, and wonders, and signs.*” Now these three words, “ miracles, wonders, and signs,” are synonymous, the import of them is the same, substantially the same. He wrought miracles. What is a miracle? A miracle has been defined — “ a suspension of the power of the laws of nature ; a suspension or counteraction of the laws of nature.” And what are the laws of nature ? The laws of nature are the association and agencies of God, by which he employs certain causes to the production of certain effects, and not others — a certain association between definite causes and definite effects — what our philosophers call “ the laws of nature ;” what the Bible calls “ the ordinances of heaven.” What philosophers signify by the terms, the essential, the inflexible, eternal laws of nature, is nothing at all but the will of God acting in a definite way ; and these laws of nature, these ordinances of heaven, this fixed association between cause and effect — Jesus of Nazareth broke in upon them, disturbed them when he pleased, set them aside as often as he listed. He showed that he was the Author of nature, and that all these laws which philosophers call the laws of nature, were of his own making, his own ordination ; and, therefore, as he produced the effects without their appropriate causes, as he produced results apart from the usual associated causes, therefore he was the God of nature ; and, by his power of working miracles, proved that he was God over all. His miracles are called *wonders*, because they filled the spectators with wonder ; and they are called *signs*, because they were indexes of the properties, and prerogatives, and character of him that wrought them.

“Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, *as ye yourselves also know.*” Yes, he might very well say that he was preaching to a people who had seen Jesus raise the dead — who had seen him walk upon the lake of Gennesareth — who had seen him multiply a handful of bread, so that thousands were fed — they had seen him give sight to a man born blind. How did he effect it? Why, he spat upon the ground, made clay with the spittle, and anointed the eyes of the man born blind! Was that likely to make a blind man see? Was that the way to open the eyes of a man born blind, to besmear the eye-balls over in that way? Why did our Savior do it in that manner? It was done to teach those who witnessed the miracle, that the thing itself did not follow from the physical means employed; for there was no connection whatever between besmearing the blind man’s eyes over in that way and his reception of sight. It was to show that the thing wrought was solely the effect of him that wrought it, and not in any wise connected with the physical means employed at the time of the production. The miracle excited their attention, as well it might. It was examined; it was tested; the scribes, and pharisees, and priests, tossed it from crueible to crueible; they endeavored to find some flaw in it; but after all their long attempts to detect some fallacy, in effect they said, “We will give it up; we cannot deny it; it is unquestionable that a notable miracle has been wrought by the man.”

His power of working miracles was farther displayed in the resurrection of the dead — as we have already noticed. He raised the son of the widow at Nain, he raised the daughter of Jairus, he raised Lazarus. Had he only raised up the daughter of Jairus, our infidels would have said, it was not a resurrection, it was merely a case of suspended animation. Well, but, besides that, he raised the son of the widow of Nain, who had been dead some days. And that is not all: he raised Lazarus, who was dead and buried, and not only dead and buried, but the process of putrefaction had commenced on the solids and fluids of the body. In that hot country putrefaction took place in three days; and, as I stated when I preached to you last, one proof of the truth of Scripture is the resurrection of Christ. It was prophesied of Christ, that God should not leave his soul in hell, and Christ was not more than three days in the grave, because if he had been he would have seen corruption. But Lazarus was more than three days in the grave; for, when he opened up the wondrous scene about to be exhibited, the sister of Lazarus said, “Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days.” But what was that to

the Son of God? He came to the mouth of the grave and said: "Lazarus, come forth;" and Lazarus started into life. It was Jesus of Nazareth that spake the word, and he was mighty in signs and in deeds.

See his power in feeding the hungry out of a single handful of bread, which he multiplied; see him walking on the waters as if a pavement of adamant were under his feet; these are some of the miracles, and signs, and wonders, done by Jesus of Nazareth, in the midst of the people; and these attested his own character as the Messiah. The prophecies that went before him intimated that he should perform miracles; and, performing such miracles, they also attested his own character, his infinite beneficence and benevolence. I pass on to notice,

II. TO WHAT THIS JESUS OF NAZARETH, A MAN APPROVED OF GOD, BY THESE MIRACLES, AND SIGNS, AND WONDERS, WAS DELIVERED; for the apostle says, "Him being delivered."

Here we may ask, why is it that Peter, who is in general so bold and perspicuous, does not mention to what circumstances, or to what condition, Jesus of Nazareth was delivered? But we shall find an answer to this by a reference to the idiom of Peter's mother tongue. Peter was a Jew, and spoke the Hebrew language; and, according to the idiom of that language, the words rendered *to be delivered*, mean to be delivered to death, to be delivered up for God, to be delivered to martyrdom. It was a common proverb among the Jews, that such an one was delivered — that is, delivered to death, delivered to martyrdom for the truth. Jesus of Nazareth was delivered to death, to a death the most extraordinary in its nature, and the most dolorous in its circumstances, if you consider the place where he died, the persons amongst whom he died, or the death itself which he endured.

Consider *the place where he died*. We all hope to die in our own homes, in our own beds; the people of God generally are allowed to die thus. But where did your Lord and Master die? One of the historians says, with inimitable and overwhelming emphasis, "They led him away to Calvary, and there they crucified him." A place putrid with blood and bones — a place, the atmosphere of which was impregnated with a blasphemous breath. Consider, too, *among whom he died*. He was crucified between two thieves, two malefactors; he had the middle place assigned him, as though he was worse than either of them. And, *as to the death itself which he endured*, you know what it was. Crucifixion was the most lingering and painful mode of death, and it was the most infamous one; and in the estimation of the



Jews, it was an accursed death, for, according to their own law, "Cur-  
sed is he that hangeth on a tree." There see the head that was  
filled with treasures of knowledge sinking lifeless upon his bosom ; see  
those hands that mixed the ointment for the eyes of the blind, that  
multiplied the loaves for the starving people, that were stretched out  
upon the sick and dying, to recover and to serve them ; see those  
hands stretched on the accursed tree ; see those feet that were be-  
dewed with the tears, and anointed with the ointment of Mary, and  
that carried him about on his journies of piety and charity, pierced  
with rugged iron ; and the heart that throbbed with love for the human  
race, and glowed with zeal for the honor of his Father, pierced with  
the cruel spear. "Behold, all ye that pass by, and see if ever was  
sorrow like unto his sorrow in the day that the Lord afflicted him in  
the fierceness of his anger." What part of his flesh was exempt from  
suffering ? He bore our sins in his own body on the tree. What part  
of his body was exempt from anguish ? Was it his hands and his  
feet ? — they were pierced with nails. Was it his temples ? — they  
were punctured with thorns. Was it his back ? — that was lacerated  
with scourges. Was it his side ? — that was broken by the hostile  
spear. Was it his bones ? — they were all as it were out of joint.  
Was it his muscles ? — they were stretched upon the gibbet. Was it  
his veins ? — they were deprived of their purple fluid. Was it his  
nerves, those canals of feeling, those rivers of sensation ? — they  
were wrung with anguish. He bore our sins in his own body on the  
tree. And all this, the affliction of his body, was as nothing compared  
with the sorrows of his soul. "My soul," said he, when he was del-  
ivered up, "is exceeding sorrowful." "Now am I sorrowful," said  
he, as if he never knew what sorrow was before. Though he had been  
a man of sorrows, and a child of grief, and began when he was the  
babe of Bethlehem to know the sorrows, though dear to him on our  
account, yet, when he came to be delivered up, he said, "Now, *now*  
is my soul exceeding sorrowful." The weight of mental anguish may  
be alleviated by two sources ; it may be alleviated by the affectionate  
sympathy of relatives and friends, or alleviated by the consolations of  
God our heavenly Father.

The weight of mental anguish, I say, may be alleviated by the sym-  
pathies of *affectionate friends*. When you die, I dare say, your  
friends will be with you, and they will shake the pillow under your  
head, and they will wipe away the cold, clammy sweat as it forms on  
your marble brow, and they will quote the precious promises, and will  
pour out the fervent prayer, and they will soothe your anguish, and  
render you a thousand nameless offices of tenderness and affection.

But how was it with your Savior? When he died, his disciples forsook him and fled; he was surrounded by grim guards — by hostile bands.

The weight of our mental anguish is often alleviated, too, *by the ministry of holy angels*. We see not their lovely forms, we hear not the melody of their voices; but they are with us in the hour of our deepest sorrow, and they perform offices of affectionate kindness to us in the moment of our dissolution. They are ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto them who are heirs of salvation; and perhaps the most important part of their ministration is rendered to us just when life is quivering on the lip, and the immortal spirit is on the confines of eternity. Our Savior had himself, during his life, been ministered to by angels; but, when delivered up to death, the angels afforded him no sympathy. O thou blessed seraph — thou that didst fly to him when in the wilderness of temptation; thou that didst appear to strengthen him when in the garden of Gethsemane — where wert thou when he was upon the cross of Calvary? He drank the wine-press of his Father's fury alone; with him was none; neither man nor angel could sympathize with him in his suffering.

The weight of mental anguish may be alleviated by *the consolations of our heavenly Father*. But Jesus of Nazareth, when delivered up to death, was without these consolations also. The Father that had honored his birth by a new star — the Father that had honored his baptism by the sound of a more than mortal voice from the excellent glory — the Father that had honored him when he performed the miracles to which I have alluded — the Father, the God of all consolation, the everlasting Father, the God of love — forsook him upon the cross. “My God (we hear no complaint from him until this, and then Christ said,) My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” And, at the sound of his voice, and the bowing of his head, nature affrighted threw herself into convulsions, the sun hid his face, the rocks rent, the graves opened, the dead came forth. Jesus of Nazareth was delivered up to death, a death the most extraordinary in its nature, and the most dolorous in its circumstances.

III. I inquire, BY WHOM HE WAS DELIVERED UP TO THIS DEATH? And the text leads our attention to two classes of agents that were concerned in this act, the one human — the other divine; the one guilty, the other holy; the one visible, the other invisible.

I notice, first, the *human agents*. “Ye men of Israel,” said the apostle, “hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by

him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know ; him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Yes, it was the Jews that did it ; their high priest had said it was expedient for Christ to die ; it was their Pontius Pilate that condemned him ; it was their Judas that betrayed him ; it was their Herod that mocked him ; it was their priests that plotted it ; it was their scribes and pharisees that hailed it ; it was their populace that shouted for it. But let not the Jews imagine that their guilt is at all diminished by the fact of the death of Christ being " according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God : " " him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." Their actions were not at all influenced by the determinate counsel of Jehovah ; the apostle tells them they were not : he says, " Ye have done it ; him ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Oh, ye detestable, ye infuriated people ; what could move you to tear, and mar, and taunt, and crucify, and revile, and slay the Lord of life and glory ? He healed your sick, cleansed your lepers, gave sight to the blind, expelled demons from the possessed, he raised your dead — for which of these things do ye crucify him ? O Jerusalem, he ennobled you by his birth, he distinguished you by his miracles, he enlightened you by his doctrines, he cherished thee with such affectionate regard that his eyes became fountains of tears. Here is an appeal by the mouth of the divine Father, " Oh, my people, testify to me what have I done to thee ? wherein have I wearied thee ? I brought thee from the house of bondage with my great might ; I made a way through the Red Sea, dried it up for the soles of thy feet ; I cast out thy enemies before thee ; I gave thee manna from the clouds ; I conducted thee by a pillar of fire and cloud ; I brought thee triumphantly forth into the land of Canaan ; I gave thee houses to live in which thou buildedst not, and wells to drink of which thou diggedst not, and fields which thou sowedst not ; I gave to thee David and Solomon for kings ; I raised up judges among you ; I gave you Moses for a prophet, and Aaron for a priest, and Miriam for a prophetess — these things have I done. Why do ye crucify me — which of all these things forms the matter of my accusation ? " Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, mayest thou not have been satisfied with having shed the blood of all the righteous men that have ever been slain, from the death of Zacharias between the porch and the altar, without imbruing thy murderous hands in the blood of the Lord of life and glory ? Oh, ye murderous, infuriated Jerusalem, ye

have taken Jesus of Nazareth, and him by wicked hands have ye crucified and slain !

But there is another agency in this transaction: *a God* appears in this amazing scene. Lift up the eyes of your mind to the throne of the heavens, to the Majesty on high, and see God delivering up his own Son to this accursed death. "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken." They could have had no power at all against the Son of man except it had been given to them from above; they could not any of them — neither Herod, nor Judas, nor Pontius Pilate, nor the priests — none of them could have had any power at all, if it had not been from God, if it had not been with the concurrence of the Lord, Jehovah himself; "him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God."

The death of Christ was not casual, it was not accidental, it was according to the certain counsels entered into between the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the abyss of a past eternity; when as yet there was darkness, when as yet there were no creatures to be redeemed; when as yet time had not begun to reign. In these councils that were held between the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, it was agreed that one of the persons of the Trinity should become incarnate for lost human nature; that one should die for our guilty world. According to these counsels, to the contract formed and entered into, Jesus of Nazareth was delivered up unto death. See Jehovah deliberating whether his own Son or man he should spare. To what will you compare this, and whereunto will you liken it? I know nothing that this transaction on the part of Jehovah can be compared unto. I know that Abraham's offering up Isaac is appealed to as something like it; but for my part, I can hardly find a shadow of resemblance between the one transaction and the other. Abraham had his son a gift from God, God had his Son by ineffable generation; Abraham owed every thing he had to God, God owed us nothing; Abraham could not have kept Isaac back from God, but not all heaven, or earth, or hell, could have ravished God's eternal Son from his Father's bosom. Abraham, in offering up Isaac, performed an act of obedience as well as of high and generous affection, but God owed nothing to us. Whereunto, then, will ye liken these doings of the Lord God, and to what will you compare them? See Jehovah, in his ancient council, deliberating with his Son about the future redemption of a future world, and deliberating whether his own Son or man he should spare — his own Son, innocent and holy; man, polluted and guilty — his own Son, the brightness of his own glory; man, the image of the devil — his own



Son, the express image of the Father's person, beloved of all heaven; man, an atom of dust, a child of earth, an heir of hell, covered over with the smoke of the bottomless pit, besmeared all over with the leprosy of abominable crimes. See Jehovah deliberating whether his own Son or man he should spare. How wondrous is it! How amazing that such deliberations should be followed by such results! Hear the declaration of the apostle on the subject; hear the oracles of God telling us the result of the whole deliberation: "He spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us all." Oh, amazing act of generosity, of noble interference, of high, unutterable love; in fact we have no language at all to express it; the mind of an angel, as well as the mind of man, is overwhelmed and confounded; we must all sit down together in the attitude of little children; we can only proclaim, "O, the depths, the heights of the knowledge of God, they — they are past finding out!" "him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands crucified and slain." Although we have no line wherewith we can fathom this mystery, wherewith we can reach the depths, — no means of ascertaining the height, and breadth, and length of this profound mystery, we find no difficulty to see the design of it. This is the

IV. and last point, THE DESIGN ON ACCOUNT OF, AND THE END FOR WHICH, JESUS OF NAZARETH WAS DELIVERED UP TO THIS DEATH — A DEATH SO EXTRAORDINARY IN ITS NATURE, AND SO DOLOROUS IN ITS CIRCUMSTANCES.

He was delivered up for what? for whom? Not for his own iniquity, for he had none: not for himself, for he was no transgressor. He was conceived and born in all the beauties of holiness; from the manger to the cross, he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. He could challenge the bitterest of his enemies and say — "Which of you convinces me of sin?" And the very circumstances attendant on his death, illustrated and proclaimed the fact of the innocency of his life. Pontius Pilate, the judge that presided, called for water and said, "I will have nothing to do with this innocent man: I am clear." The wife of the judge had a dream about the matter, and so did the dream lie upon her spirit, that, unusual as it was to send any message to a judge on the bench, she sent to him on the bench, and said, "Have thou nothing to do with the blood of this just man." Judas, the traitor that had betrayed him, that had bartered him away for thirty pieces of silver, ran in among the chief priests in a frenzy, flung down the money, and said, "I have

sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood." The thief upon the cross said, "This man hath done nothing amiss." The centurion, with his hundred of soldiers, planted around the cross to see the certainty of the fulfilment of the sentence, said *first*, to the honor of his humanity, "This was a righteous man!" and then exclaimed, to the honor of his *divinity*, "Truly, this righteous man was the Son of God!" And thus wisdom is justified, not only of her children, but by her enemies also. The very things that were intended to tarnish his innocence, were the means of eliciting and establishing it; and that not before half of the people, but when all the people were gathered together from Dan to Beersheba. So true is it that he was delivered not for his own iniquity, for he never had any.

Now, we are only acquainted with the iniquity of angels and men — with the iniquity of fallen angels, and the iniquity of our own species — and the question is narrowed to this: If Jesus were not delivered for his own iniquity — having none at all — it comes to this: he was delivered for the iniquity either of angels that sinned, or for our iniquity. Now, then, for which of the two was it? Was it for the iniquity of the angels? He passed by the angels; he took not hold of their nature; he never was found in fashion as an angel. Oh! I love the angels, and I will tell you why I love them; among a thousand other reasons, I love them for this — that they do not envy man the grandeur and glory of his being redeemed by the Son of God, while that part of their own species that are sunk into rebellion, gone away from God, was not taken hold of by the purposes of Jehovah, and not taken hold of by the Son of God. When Jesus of Nazareth was born, the angels sung. What did they sing? What did they shout over the plain of Bethlehem? "Glory to God in the highest" — and in *hell* peace? No; and because they could not sing in *hell* peace, did they refuse to sing on *earth* peace? They could not say, and they did not say, "Good will to devils," to our lost brethren; but could say, and they did say, "Good will to man." Jesus of Nazareth was "delivered for our offences, and was raised for our justification." He took hold of our nature: "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." Jesus Christ, the just, delivered himself up for us, the unjust, that he might bring us to God. He saw human nature sinking, falling, plunging into ruin, total and eternal ruin, and he felt for us. Why he felt for us, rather than for angels that sinned, do not ask me; I know nothing about it — I can tell you nothing about the matter. It is enough for me to know, that he loves me, and loves you, and that he loves all our apostate race. It is the grandeur of the gospel, it is our gospel,

that Jesus of Nazareth loved the human race. In spite of its sinking he came after it, and caught it, and snatched, and lifted it out of the ruin that was enclosing it in, and gave it back to God. "He died the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."

"Well, then, here comes in the old, withered, good-for-nothing objection of the Socinians, who are fain to tell us that this is a very strange procedure — this is a most unaccountable thing to say, that Jesus, the innocent and holy, should suffer for the guilty and unholy. They tell us it is an unjust thing that the innocent should suffer and atone for the guilty; but then I ask them, why did he suffer, for what did he suffer, if it was not to atone for the guilty? There was some end to be answered by the suffering of the cross. When a holy being so distinguished endured such suffering, there must have been some end in view. Why, then, I ask, did he suffer? O, they say, he suffered to give us an example of suffering, to give us an example of magnanimity, to give us a model of patience under suffering. And they talk about justice; they bring an accusation of forming a monstrous doctrine, when I say Jesus Christ died to atone for a guilty world, — and they say he died for a reason not a millionth part so good! If there is injustice in his dying to save a world from the curse of God, there is a million times more monstrous injustice in his dying merely to teach us how to suffer. He died by his own consent. He was delivered up, the text indeed says, by the determinate counsel of God, and by the wicked hands or hearts of the Jews, and he was delivered up as much by his own will, by his own consent, as he was either by the determinate counsel of the Father, or the wicked hands and hearts of the Jews. O what a lovely victim is Christ, not unwillingly dragged to the altar, not unwillingly pressed upon the altar: oh no! What bound him to the cross? Was it the nails? If he had never been fastened by any thing but nails, he had never been fastened at all. It was love that bound him to the cross; it was love that carried him to the cross; it was love to us that led him to go to the high altar; and it was love to us that fastened him to that altar.

Oh, for this love of Christ — this love of God! There it is; I am fast; you must ask me no more. If you ask me why Jesus died for you, I can only say because he loved you. If you ask me why he loved you rather than angels, I can give no answer at all; I am lost in an ocean of love — I can go no lower — I do not want to go higher or deeper; — it is love.

"Oh, for this love let rocks and hills  
Their lasting silence break:  
And all harmonious human tongues  
The Savior's praises speak."

I am anxious, before I close the subject, to have the matter brought home to your consciences, and to know how you stand affected to this great subject, to know whether or not you have believed on this crucified Savior to the salvation of your souls. It is not enough to hear of this Savior, and of this salvation; it is not enough to hear of this crucifixion, and the love that prompted it; there must be a personal appropriation of the benefit of the death of Christ, and the blood that was poured out on mount Calvary — the blood that was shed there must be poured out on our hearts — must be applied here — the blood that was shed eighteen hundred years ago must be sprinkled on our hearts now, to-night, this hour, this moment. “His blood be on you and your children,” may it be sprinkled on all, to wash away your sins, to justify your persons, to sanctify your natures. Oh, if the blood of the Lamb shall be found upon you at your dying day, at the day of judgment, happy are ye; “happy the people that is in such a case.” You remember reading of the case of the children of Israel, of the sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb upon the door-posts of the houses in Egypt. Why was that blood sprinkled on the door-posts? You say it was to distinguish the houses of the Israelites from the houses of the Egyptians. What, could not the omniscience of Jehovah distinguish between the houses of Israel and the houses of Egypt without a visible mark being upon the doors of the one to identify it? As I take it, the true, the grand reason, why the blood of the paschal lamb was sprinkled upon the door-posts of the houses of Israel, was to teach you, and your children, and your children’s children to the latest generation of those that shall accompany you to the throne of God, that the atonement of Christ must be applied by faith, that the blood shed must be sprinkled. It was not enough that the passover was killed, that the blood of the lamb was poured out, but it must be applied — as the blood was sprinkled on the door-posts, so the blood of the atoning Lamb must be applied to us by faith.

For my part, I see no reason why the application should not take place this instant. I feel assured that, as to many, it has taken place already; but I fear as to some, I fear as to several, the application has not yet taken place; and if you die before it occurs, it had been better for you never to have been born. And why do you not look for the application to be made just now? You very likely will admit with the preacher, that the application must take place some time or other, some how or other, before you die; but then you have a strange way of settling the matter. At present you think some how or other, in some undefinable and mysterious manner, the thing is to take place; I tell you it is to take place by the application of the truth of the gos-



pel, and I know of no time and no occasion so likely for the application to take place as when you are hearing the gospel in which the truth is revealed ; as when you are in the house of God, and on the day of God. You are at the pool-side, but I want you to get into the pool. It was quite mournful, it was quite melancholy, to hear the story of the man lying at the pool all those years. You are here, get into the pool. You must not be at it, merely, but must step in. May the angel trouble the waters, that you may wash and be well ! May you believe and be saved, believe and live, and live for ever. Amen.

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## SERMON XI.

THE SONG OF ANGELS.

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 BY REV. EDWARD PARSONS, JR.  
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“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.”—LUKE ii. 14.

NOTHING was ever, humanly speaking, more unlikely, than that the cause of the despised and persecuted Nazarene should have survived its universally-furious opposition, or escaped its apparently inevitable disgrace. For, in the external character of Jesus, there were no glories that were calculated to arrest the attention, or to secure the applause of a wicked and a corrupted world. If you refer to his birth, he was born in a manger. If you refer to his circumstances, he was “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” If you refer to his state, he was so poor, that, though “the foxes had their holes and the birds of the air their nests, he had not where to lay his head.” If you refer to his mission, he came to commence no earthly dynasty and to establish no earthly throne ; for he came “to seek and to save that which was lost.” If you refer to his name, he assumed no name renowned in the schools of philosophy, or in the annals of war ; for his name was called Jesus, because “he should save his people from their sins.” If you refer to his authority, “his kingdom was not of this world.” If you refer to his followers, they were twelve poor, illiterate, and uneducated fishermen. If you refer to his appearance, “his visage was marred more than any man’s, and his form more than the sons of men.” If you refer to his death, he died upon the summit of Calvary. He had glories ; but they were invisible by mortal vision.

He gained victories ; but they were solely the conquests of truth over error. His robe was the mockery of royalty; his sceptre was a reed ; his throne was his cross ; and his diadem neither glittered with jewels, nor blazed with gems, because it was “ a crown of thorns.”

But the cause of this despised individual has survived ; it has survived, increasing its glory and extending its praise ; it has survived, while the desolating hand of time has subverted the firmest foundations of human policy, and blasted the brightest glories of human fame. And this evening, exulting in its perpetually-increasing triumph, during the long period of eighteen hundred years, we anticipate the happiness of the hour which is approaching, when the nations shall rejoice in the beams of “ the Sun of righteousness,” and in the splendor of the millennial day.

Now it has been one demonstration of the superior glory of the Savior, that it has been identified with the ministry of angels. The angels, indeed, as “ the morning stars sang together,” and as “ the sons of God,” they “ shouted for joy,” when the Savior created this visible universe. The angels, as you see in the context of this passage, were with the Savior when he entered into our world, to die for our sins, the “ just for the unjust, to bring us unto God.” They followed him through every stage and step of his mediatorial undertaking, oft wondering how and where the scene of love would end. When he died, they surrounded his cross, as astonished spectators of that sad scene of unutterable abasement and distress. When he rose from the dead, they rolled away the stone from the mouth of his sepulchre.

“ They brought his chariot from above,  
And bore him to his throne ;  
Clapp'd their triumphant wings, and cried,  
' The glorious work is done ! ' ”

Now, the words of my text constitute the song of the angels, in connexion with the mediation and work of Jesus ; for the shepherds were feeding their flocks on the plain of Bethlehem, “ and suddenly there was with the angel,” who appeared to them, “ a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men.”

In these words, my dear friends, there are three topics, to which, by the divine help and blessing, it is my intention now for a few moments to direct your attention. First, you will allow me to request you to refer to the brightness of the divine glory; the angels exclaimed, “ Glory to God in the highest.” Secondly, to the excellency of the divine influence ; they said, “ on earth peace.” And, thirdly, to the immensity of the divine love ; they said, “ Good-will toward men.”

And then we shall attempt to close the discourse, by applying the principles contained in it to the object which has more immediately convened us.

In the first place, then, let us refer to THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE DIVINE GLORY. The angels exclaimed, "Glory to God in the highest."

Now there is nothing so essential to the moral happiness of intelligent beings, as proper views of the character and of the glory of God.

Since God is the only source of moral obligation, an acquaintance with his character is essential to the due discharge of that obligation.

You will always find the moral characters and principles of men to be excellent or degraded in proportion to the accuracy of their acquaintance with the divine character and claims. In proof of this, you have only to refer to the history of the world, and you will find that distorted ideas of the character of God have always been connected with the perpetration of enormous crime. Look to the ancient Greeks and Romans; why was it, that, according to the testimony of Cicero himself, the most unnatural lusts and disgusting impurities were not only tolerated among the homes of private life, but even committed in the temples of their deities — but because of their distorted ideas of the character of God?

Look to the ancient Britons; why was it, that our forefathers acted on the demoniacal notion of human sacrifices, and imbrued their hands in the blood of their captives and victims — but because of their distorted ideas of the character of God? Look to the Indians; why is it, that the wretched Hindoos cast their writhing bodies beneath the wheels of the gigantic idol's blood-stained car, plunge their offspring into the waves of the Ganges, and light up their country with the lurid glare of the funeral piles of devoted widows — but because of their distorted ideas of the character of God? Look to the modern French; why was it, that in their country, during a recent revolution, deeds of barbarism and of cruelty, of licentiousness and of pollution, of unprecedented and almost infernal atrocity, were perpetrated, which are enough to turn back the eyes of the observer with disgust and with horror — but because of their distorted ideas of the character of God?

Abstracted from proper views of the character of God, every motive to the pursuit of holiness must be annihilated; vice must extend its encroaching claims and its polluting power; and the whole immortal being, as the inhabitant of a fatherless and forsaken world, must be descending to the mansions of darkness and despair.

It is here, then, you see the distinguishing excellency of the mediatorial work of the Savior. He has revealed all the perfections of God, all the claims of the great Legislator upon the obedience and reverence of his creatures, and all the sanctions which are appended to his laws,

in the joys and the sorrows, the terrors and the triumphs of the invisible world. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."—"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." But it is not enough to say this. It is not enough to say that the Lord Jesus, in his mediatorial work, has *revealed* the character of God; we must also say that he has *glorified* the character of God. And the accuracy of the ascription of the angels, when they said, "Glory to God in the highest," can soon be made apparent by a few appropriate considerations.

Behold, in the person and in the work of Christ, *the glory of the divine wisdom*. For the wisdom of God is so illustriously displayed in the mediation of Jesus, that he is expressly called "the wisdom of God;" the gospel which he proclaimed, is designated "the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory;" and we are told by the same apostle, that "to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, hath been made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." Admire, in the mediation of Christ, the wisdom of God—in the constitution of the Savior's person, so that, while as man he could be afflicted, and could suffer, and could die, as God could be exalted, and could be enthroned, and could be adored—in rendering the entrance of sin actually subservient to the noblest display of the perfections of God, and the highest happiness of man—and in such a complete baffling of the powers and principalities of hell, that we are healed by our Savior's wounds, crowned by our Savior's cross, absolved by our Savior's condemnation, enriched by our Savior's poverty, and glorified by our Savior's disgrace. Here alone there was abundant reason for the exclamation of the angels, "Glory to God in the highest."

Again, behold in the mission and in the work of Christ, *the glory of the divine power*. Power was glorified in the creation of the fabric of the universe; power has been glorified in the perpetual revolutions of the planetary worlds, of which the universe is composed. But all the manifestations of the power of God, that have ever been presented to us in the works of creation or in the dispensations of providence, sink into absolute insignificance, when compared with its manifestation in the mediation of Jesus. Go, and muse on the ministry of Christ.—What though he was nailed to the accursed tree—what though he was taunted, in the midst of his dying agonies, by the scoffing blasphemers, who said, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us: if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." What though his disciples were



lost in despair, and his enemies were rejoicing in the imagined infamy of his cause, when he was consigned to the lowly sepulchre of the rock, with a band of Roman soldiers for his guard — was there not power, when, amidst the agonies of death, he changed the heart of a blaspheming malefactor, and took his renovated spirit with him, as a trophy of his grace, to the kingdom of heaven? Was there not power, when he bore for us the burden of that wrath, which would otherwise have sunk us down to the lowest and to the deepest hell? Was there not power, when he broke the dart of death — when he demolished the throne of the king of terrors — when “through death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and delivered them, who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage;” so that he “hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel?” Was there not power in the supernatural effects which attended the first preaching of his gospel, by which the whole fabric of Gentile idolatry and Jewish superstition was overthrown, and the banner of the cross was elevated above the palaces of the Cæsars? And has there not been power in the emancipation of millions and myriads from the thralldom of their corruption, who are now consecrating all the faculties of their being, and all the duration of eternity, to the utterance of his praise? Where is the individual, who, in connection with these observations, does not again see the justice of the ascription of the angels — “Glory to God in the highest?”

Again, you may behold, in the mediatorial work of the Savior, *the glory of the divine holiness and justice*. If every son and daughter of Adam were to be cast into unquenchable fire — if every angel in heaven were to be united with those fallen spirits, who are reserved in blackness and chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day — if the earth which we inhabit were to be transformed into a multitude of worlds — if every blade of grass — if every atom of sand — if every drop of dew — if every particle of earth were to be changed into incomprehensible numbers of intelligent creatures, and if all, on account of sin, were to experience the devouring wrath of God, and were to welter forever in seas of fire rolling in the caverns of the damned, it would form no such manifestation of the justice and holiness of God, as is presented to us in the mediation of Christ.

O what a groan was that!

Heard from heav'n's highest throne to earth's deep centre.  
 'Twas our enormous load of heavy guilt,  
 Which bow'd his blessed head, o'erwhelm'd his cross,  
 Made groan the centre, burst earth's marble womb,  
 With pangs, strange pangs, deliver'd of her dead.  
 Hell howl'd, and Heav'n that hour let fall a tear;  
 Heav'n bled, that man might live; heav'n wept, that man  
 Might never die.

Who can stand on the hill of Calvary — who can stand under the shadow of the cross — who can see the Savior's head hanging over his agitated bosom — who can perceive the spear of the murderer penetrating his heart, and then who, after contemplating these things, and recollecting that every pang that he bore, and every tear that he shed, were all on account of the guilt of our offences — where is the individual, I say, who, after adverting to matters like these, is not ready, with overwhelming gratitude and with penitent tears, to adopt the language of the seraphim, and to cry, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is filled with his glory?” Do you not, then, my friends, again see the justice of the angelic ascription, “Glory to God in the highest?”

But behold again, in the mission and in the work of the Savior, *the glory of the divine love*. Now suppose a monarch seated upon a throne of unbounded royalty and power, suppose him surrounded with all the insignia of despotic authority, suppose him covering continents with his armies and the ocean with his fleets, and surpassing, in the grandeur of his achievements, the most splendid exploits of ancient or of modern times; then suppose, that he were to pass from the splendor of his court and the radiance of his royalty, with all the meltings of pity, to relieve a single family, bowed down with wretchedness and abandoned to despair; I would ask you, whether that one single act would not redound more to his glory than the most illustrious achievements of his policy, or the most splendid successes of his arms. Now, my friends, what is all this compared with the love of God for a lost world, as displayed in the mediatorial work of Jesus? Although our Savior had existed from distant ages in his own uncreated being, perfectly happy in himself and surrounding his throne with a lustre, before which even angelic intelligences were confounded — although he had created a universe of worlds, so vast that if the whole system of which we form a part were to be annihilated, its loss would no more be felt than the subtraction of a blade of grass from the foliage of the field, or the fall of a leaf from the verdure of the forest — yet, when miserable man rebelled, when he raised his arm against Him who could have crushed him with a stroke or damned him with a frown, he descended to this almost imperceptible spot in the realms of being; he assumed the body of man, who is a worm; he descended to the lowest recesses of sorrow and woe; he died an ignominious death upon the cross; he made atonement for sin and reconciliation for iniquity; he reunited heaven and earth; he filled the whole celestial world with the trophies of his grace, and he raised countless multitudes of the redeemed to a happiness sublimer than that of Eden, and to honors more exalted than

those of the angels, to the very throne of Deity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the eternal all in all. O stupendous love! O infinite mercy! O grace beyond degree! He descended; he was born; he suffered; he wept; he bled; he expired. When the Savior came into our world, Jehovah smiled with unexpressible tenderness from the throne of his dominion: the groans of the whole creation, which has travailed in pain until now, were hushed into a momentary pause; a thrilling note of joy resounded to the extremities of the universe; angels, as you see in the context of this passage, resting for a moment from their customary employ, crowded to heaven's battlements, as admiring spectators of the wonderful scene; and man that was a rebel was pardoned, man that was a wanderer was reclaimed, man that was condemned was blessed, man that was accursed was redeemed. "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, and might, and majesty and dominion be unto him, that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever." Do you not, then, again see the justice of the angelic ascription, "Glory to God in the highest?"

And here I must advance one step further, and I shall only make the observation, before I proceed to the second part of my discourse: in the mediatorial work of Christ, *you have all the perfections of God in harmony*. Here there is not the glory of mercy at the expense of justice; here there is not the glory of wisdom at the expense of power; but the glory of all the divine attributes united. Here unsullied justice, and immaculate holiness and infinite grace are all mingled; not one of them darkens or eclipses the other, but they shine with united beams and concentrated radiance.

"Here his whole name appears complete,  
Nor wit can guess, nor reason prove  
Which of the letters best is writ,  
The power, the wisdom, or the love."

Thus, with this line of illustration, we might proceed to an almost indefinite extent; but enough, I trust, has been adduced to you to show the justice of the ascription of the angels, when, adverting to the mediatorial work of Immanuel, they said, "Glory to God in the highest." There, then, is the brightness of the divine glory.

Let us now proceed, in the second place, to refer to THE EXCELLENCE OF THE DIVINE INFLUENCE. The angels, you observe, not only said, "Glory to God in the highest," but they also said, "On earth peace."

Now, my friends, one of the greatest evils, by which our world can be afflicted, *is to be found in war*. It is one of the most hideous of all the train of sin. Ever since the time of the first murderer it has stalked over our world, brandishing the torch of the incendiary, and



marching to the work of destruction, preceded by terror and flame, followed by devastation, creating the riot of death and the carnival of the grave. Go to the field of battle ; and amidst the alternations from cold malignity to furious rage, amidst the cries of the wounded, the shrieks of the dying, the dashing of weapons, and the clangor of artillery, learn the demoniacal character of war. Follow the march of a hostile army through a devastated country : and while you see opulent cities plundered by a brutal soldiery, and abandoned to the reign of cruelty and lust, the habitations of peaceful industry committed to the flames, and humanity itself expiring before its progress, confess again the demoniacal character of war. Refer to the invariable influence of war upon those nations where a fondness for it has prevailed ; it has annihilated the agriculture and commerce of the richest nations that were ever presented to our view by the geography of the globe. And more ; it has emptied earth and peopled hell ; it has been employed to make angels weep and fiends triumph over the deplorable aspect of this guilty world. Only think, for a moment, of the numbers that war has destroyed ; you are told, by one of the best historians of ancient or modern times, that, in fifty battles that were fought by Cæsar, he trampled upon the corpses of 1,192,000 of his fellow-creatures : and it is no exaggeration to say, that war has actually immolated a greater number of individuals than are now to be found upon the surface of the earth. Now suppose that, by some exertion of supernatural power, the whole earth were to be depopulated, suppose that its cities were to be destroyed, that its houses were to be emptied, that its inhabitants were to be annihilated, and that the whole world were to become a great charnel-house or cemetery, filled with the bleaching bones and corrupting bodies of the dead ; how intensely shocking is the idea ! But this chimera of destruction, war has actually realized ; this immensity of ruin, war has actually accomplished ; and had it not been for a restraining providence, by war human society would long since have become extinct, the last man would have expired, and God would have been despoiled of the revenue of his praise.

But let it be remarked, that the spirit of Christianity is essentially the spirit of *peace*. And when the angels contemplated the crimson seas of human gore which have stained the soil of almost every country under heaven, and then when they remembered, that, by the tranquillizing influence of the gospel of Christ, the passions of man would be assuaged, and the lion transformed into a lamb, so that, in process of time, the whole universe would be a temple of amity and concord, over the gates of which the inscription would be found, “ Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity ! ”



Do you not see abundant reason why they should associate with the ascription of "Glory to God in the highest," the exclamation, "on earth, peace?"

I have said that the spirit of the gospel is essentially the spirit of peace: find me a single man, who has been brought to be subject to the power of the truth, whose passions are not calmed, and whose violence is not subdued. I have said that the spirit of the gospel is essentially the spirit of peace; no sooner were its influences extensively diffused, than those infamous gladiatorial spectacles, so common in the latter ages of the Roman empire — to which even females, forgetting the mildness and tenderness of their sex, crowded to see their fellow-creatures dying by the dagger's point, or amidst the howlings of wild beasts — sink into oblivion. Again, I have said that the spirit of the gospel is essentially the spirit of peace: one of its fundamental principles is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" and one of its unalterable maxims is, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head." Once more; I say, the spirit of the gospel is essentially the spirit of peace; and when that enrapturing era shall arrive, when Immanuel shall sway his sceptre from the northern to the southern pole, when he shall extend his illimitable dominion, so as to receive the homage and the adoration of all the creatures he has formed, then the demon of war shall die, then the temple of Janus shall be closed, then the sword shall be put into an eternal scabbard, then a heaven-directed messenger shall wave the olive branch over the distracted nations, then a voice, louder than a thousand thunders, coming from the excellent glory, shall be heard amidst the tumults of our world, crying, "Peace, peace; be still, be still." The children of the same Father and creatures of the same God shall crowd around the cross as their centre, with redemption for their theme, and with heaven for their home; and then the triumphant watchword of all the tribes and families of man shall be, "Here there is neither barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, Greek nor Jew; Christ is all and in all." Hasten on, ye circling years, and bring this blessed period, when all the inhabitants of the earth shall praise him — come, happy and holy day, which our inspired prophets have described, and of which our holy poets have sung, when the Savior's name shall endure for ever, when it shall continue as long as the sun and the moon, when the whole earth shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed.

You perceive, then, my dear friends, why it was that the angels, when they heard of the mediatorial work of Christ, not only exclaimed,

“Glory to God in the highest,” but connected that exclamation with the words, “on earth peace.”

And then, thirdly, you must advert to THE IMMENSITY OF THE DIVINE LOVE. Now here alone there is abundant matter for a sermon; but, inasmuch as I have to set before you the claims of an institution, which solicits the approval and liberal contributions of all who are within these walls, I shall waive many of the topics which otherwise I should have presented, and I shall only suggest those particular thoughts which may bring the subject to a happy conclusion.

There is something truly astounding in the declaration, “Good-will toward men;” the good-will of God toward man, rebel man, insulting man, blaspheming man, man — though wooed and awed, blessed and chastised — a rebel still, a rebel amidst the thunders of the throne.— “Good-will toward men!” no good-will of this description was displayed to the angels; when they sinned they were irrecoverably lost; when they sinned, they were exiled from their seats of bliss; but when men sinned, we find them elevated to those vacant thrones.

“O, love of infinite degree!  
 Unmeasurable grace!  
 Must heav’n’s eternal darling die,  
 To save the trait’rous race?  
 Must angels sink for ever down,  
 To burn in quenchless fire,  
 While God forsakes his shining throne,  
 To raise us wretches higher?  
 O for this love let rocks and hills  
 Their lasting silence break,  
 And all harmonious human tongues  
 The Savior’s praises speak.”

“Good-will toward men!” Now in order to understand the comprehensive meaning of this, ponder upon the words, “God commended his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” Ponder again upon this declaration, “God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved,) and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Ponder again, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he hath saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” “Good-will toward men!” Only refer, my friends, to the appropriateness, to the applicable power of the good-will of God to our circumstances and wants; and then let your hearts

bound with love, and let your bosoms burn with gratitude. Think of the hours of penitence; then think of the good-will of God, and go on your way with the prophetic song, "O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with us, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me." Think of affliction; and then think of the good-will of God, and come to the conclusion of the apostle, when he said, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Think of the hour of death; and then think of the good-will of God to man, and confront the last enemy with the triumphant exclamation, "O grave, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" Think of the judgment-day, of the conflagration of the globe, of the melting of the elements, of the passing away of the heavens, of the burning of the earth, of the rearing of the great white throne, and of the pronouncement of the irrevocable destiny of the whole human race; and then think of the good-will of God, and anticipate the utterance of the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Think of the ages of eternity, rolling for ever and for ever, either in heaven or in hell; and then think of the good-will of God, and you may turn to "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," flowing from his throne, interminable like the perfections of his nature, and passing all knowledge like the heights and depths of his love.

Thus you see, my dear friends, that, if you advert even to the surface of the subject, if you even contemplate it as it presents itself to the most superficial observer, you find abundant reason why the song of the angels at the birth of the Savior should be, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

Now it would ill become me to apply these principles to the matter that has convened us this evening, if I did not, before I proceed, make my appeal to this numerous auditory, while I ask of all the individuals of whom it is composed, if they have any acquaintance with the meditation of Christ, thus bringing "glory to God," thus diffusing "peace on earth," and thus connected with "good-will to men." Ah! my dear hearers, it will be of no consequence to you who may be saved if you are not; and it will be of no avail to you who may pass through the golden gates of the celestial city into the new Jerusalem, if you are not there. Allow me this evening to make my appeal to you. I remember how, two and twenty years ago, in this place, I first commemorated the Savior's dying love, at a Missionary Communion; since that time I have never been within the walls of this edifice; and such is the uncertainty of human life, that it is exceedingly probable we never shall be collected together again, until we stand before the judg-

ment-seat of Christ. Now I must be permitted, under these circumstances, though "in weakness, and in fear, and much trembling" — I must be permitted, before I bring this discourse to a conclusion, to make one appeal to you. Now I ask *you* — I ask *you* — if you have any experimental and personal acquaintance with the mediation of Christ, the sum and the substance of which are presented to you in the song of the angels. Yonder, I fear, may be found an individual, who, after having heard the gospel month after month and year after year, has only realized one influence from it, hardening his heart and preparing him as fuel for the flame. And I fear, many in this place at the present time, know not the power of prayer, have never uttered the words, "Lord, save us, or we perish," and are still at a distance from the shelter of the Redeemer's love. Poor, unfortunate individuals! have pity, have pity upon yourselves; if you turn aside from the Savior, there is no other sacrifice for sin, and you are actually perpetrating, with suicidal hands, the murder of your everlasting peace. Poor, unfortunate individuals! have pity, have pity upon yourselves; days are passing; time is receding; eternity is advancing; many, on your right hand and on your left, have recently been taken to their long home. O, why are you unconcerned? If the stubborn knee has never bent in prayer before, O let it begin to bend to-night. If the callous soul has never uttered the exclamation for mercy before, O let it plead to-night. By all the perfections of God, which have this evening been presented to your view — by all the sweet influences of the gospel of everlasting peace — by all the immensity of the love of God — by all the songs of angels — by all the transports of the redeemed on the one hand, and by the weeping, and the wailing, and the gnashing of teeth of the damned on the other, I entreat you, I implore you, I charge you, that this evening you begin to attend to the things which belong to your peace. Spirit of the living God! descend and rest upon this congregation. Spirit of grace and of supplication! descend and rest upon this congregation. Spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind, and of holiness, and of peace! descend and rest upon this congregation. Spirit of glory and of God! descend and rest upon this congregation. Oh! that now — oh! that now there may be a shaking among the dry bones. Oh! that now — oh! that now it may be said of many of you, "Behold, he prayeth!" Oh! that now — oh! that now there may be rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God, over many sinners that are repenting here. Then our meeting together will have been for the better and not for the worse; and then, in a brighter world of loveliness and of day, we shall strike together our golden harps to the Savior's praise, and cast



our starry crowns at his feet, while, with the whole celestial universe, we unite in the acclamation, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain! worthy is the Lamb that was slain!"

*Now*, my friends, the engagements of this Sabbath have drawn to a close. *Now* the shadows of the evening have gathered around us. *Now* we are another Lord's day nearer to eternity. How long we may be spared we cannot tell; how many more opportunities we may have of hearing of the glad tidings of great joy we cannot tell; how long we may live to call upon the mercy of God, and to present ourselves before the throne of grace, we cannot tell. But as you go out at those doors to-night, and as you return to your respective places of abode, let the following inquiry dwell upon your minds, and be connected with your prayers: "The friend or the foe of the Savior, which am I?" I have heard to-night of the angelic ascription, now let me bring the matter to a test and to a close. "The friend or the foe of the Savior — which am I?" All eternity, all heaven, all earth, all hell, await your reply. "The friend or the foe of Christ — which am I?"

Arise, O God, and plead thine own cause! arise, O God, and plead thine own cause!

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## SERMON XII.

A COMING LORD.

BY REV. JOSEPH WOLFF, D. D.,  
A CONVERTED JEW.

"And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."—LUKE i. 30—33.

You perceive, my friends, that this is prophecy. Therefore, for the better understanding of it, we must first of all give you the definition of prophecy. Prophecy is a prediction of an event, which is still to come; a prediction of history.

Now how must such a prophecy be construed, in order to find out the real sense of it? We must try to find out the grammatical meaning of it; and then we must examine whether such a prophecy has really been fulfilled. This is quite common sense; and every one of you will agree with me. Moses himself gives us, in Deuteronomy,

this direction, how we may know that a prophet has spoken. If the event he predicted has come to pass, then we may know that a prophet has been among us; if the event does not come to pass, then he has spoken presumptuously and rashly.

Let us now examine this prediction; which had been given already in the twenty-third of Jeremiah, and seventh of Isaiah.

“Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favor with God.” And in what was this favor to consist? “And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.” This verse needs no interpretation at all. Every one knows, it is admitted by all, by profane history, by the Jews, in Josephus and in their other writers, the most deadly foes of Christ, that Jesus was born, and that the Virgin Mary was his mother.

“He shall be great.” Every one will admit this again — will admit that he was great. The mode of establishing his religion by twelve fishermen, proved that he was great. His conduct on the cross proved that he was great; he looked down upon his enemies and prayed for them. His resurrection proved that he had some higher power than a mere creature. That he was great, Infidelity has witnessed in a most remarkable manner. I was struck lately in reading a book I brought from Bokhara; where it is said that Mahomet has predicted that his religion shall altogether pull down the religion of the Nazarene throughout the East, and the religion of the Koran be established. Now it is very remarkable, that when his mighty officer and general went into Armenia, and tried to sweep away Christianity there, (where there was a convent which is still existing, as some travellers who are here well know, and where the great Ignatius Alnoorane, “the enlightener,” had preached the gospel in the second century,) he was not able to convert to Mahomedanism one single district of that territory. Continually their exclamation was — “Christ, God and very Christ, God of very God!” Voltaire also tried to pull down Christ; his exclamation was — “Down with the infamous;” has he succeeded? That this church is full now, is witness that Christ is great in the nineteenth century, as he was proved in the seventeenth, and in the middle ages, when he still had servants who “worshipped him in spirit and in truth.” This has taken place, then; it is no more prophecy; it has become history.

“He shall be called the Son of the Highest.” How do you, members of the Church of England, call him? “Son of the Highest.” The Independents? “Son of the Highest.” The Kirk of Scotland? “Son of the Highest.” I have seen Nestorians in their own mountains, and I asked them — How do you call Christ? Their answer

was — “Jesus, the Son of the living God; Jesus, the Son of the Highest.” So far, still, the text has become history. But let us go on.

“And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.” Has this taken place?

Before we give any opinion, let us examine how he was the son of David. It is wonderful how Scripture explains Scripture. In the first of the Romans we read, in the fourth verse, that he was “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit;” but how was he the Son of David? Why, in the third verse we read that he was “made of the seed of David” — according to the Spirit? no — “according to the flesh.” Then if he was the son of David according to the flesh, the throne of David which he has must also be according to the flesh. And that he is to sit upon the throne of his father David “according to the flesh,” is decidedly predicted also in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles: “Therefore being a prophet,” (speaking of David,) “and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne.”

Here let us examine what is “the throne of David.” Now the New Testament is the inspired commentary on the Old, and let us not depart from it; but let us lay altogether aside all human opinions, whether of antiquity or of modern times. “The throne of David” in the whole of the books of Samuel and the Kings, and in Isaiah and all the prophets, refers us to Palestine, of which Jerusalem is the capital. If this, after Christ’s coming, in the dispensation of the New Testament, was to be something quite different — if there was to be another “throne of David,” the New Testament, which is a commentary, would have given us quite different words for it. But does it? No; you have the same words — “the throne of David” in the Old Testament, “the throne of David” in the New.

Then, is this prophecy fulfilled? No: it is not yet fulfilled; and shall not be fulfilled until his second coming in glory.

Here I give you two axioms, which are carried through the whole of the Old and New Testament. Christ was anointed to the three-fold office of priest, prophet and king. As High Priest, he was anointed, and visibly manifested; he was sacrificed on the cross, and passed visibly into heaven. As prophet, he was also anointed and visibly manifested; he spake as “never man spake,” and he stood upon the mountain, and multitudes saw the great prophet — “the prophet,” as he was called. As king, he was also anointed, but is not yet visibly manifested. Just as David his father, and the type of Christ, was

anointed by Samuel, but had not entered his kingly office until Saul was slain ; so Christ, who is also anointed as king, has not yet entered that kingly office, and shall not enter it until the antitype of Saul — Antichrist — shall be slain.

This is the drift of Christ's instructions to his disciples on this subject. I know that there are many who do not completely agree with me ; such as Butler, and Bishop Maltby, and several bishops in our time. There is a general opinion current in the Christian Church, that the great fault of the Jews was, that they expected a temporal kingdom, and Christ intended merely to establish a spiritual kingdom, and therefore they disbelieved. Now I ask, is there one single text in the whole of the Scripture, which proves this ? On the contrary, he continually tried to prove to the Jews, and to his disciples, who were of the same opinion, that their error consisted, not in expecting such a kingdom, but in forgetting that a great event was to intervene. I refer you to the twenty-fourth of Luke. The disciples, after his crucifixion, had got quite discouraged ; they said, " We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel," — and they (with the rest of the Jews) understood by that their being redeemed from the captivity of the Romans ; to-day is the third day, they said, and we see nothing ; we are disappointed ; we are still slaves of the Romans. Now Christ appears ; and what does he say to them ? You have misunderstood the prophets ? No : not a word of it. On the contrary, he says — " O fools, and slow of heart to believe *all* that the prophets have spoken ! " You believe only one part, with regard to the glory ; you forget altogether the other part. " Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory ? "

The same method which Christ thus took to set them right, was pursued afterwards by the apostles, as you will see in the third of the Acts. " And now, brethren," says the apostle, " I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers ; " and in what did consist their ignorance ? " But those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled ; " he does not say, that all with regard to the glory had been fulfilled, but only the suffering part. " Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out," (for there is another time to come, which is also predicted,) " when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord ; and he shall send Jesus Christ," (this is the second time,) " which before was preached unto you ; whom the heaven must receive " — for ever to be there ? no, " until the times of restitution of all things," (the times of the bringing back of all things to their former condition,) " which God hath



spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets," and which has not yet been fulfilled.

Now go to a further question: how shall he appear, when he is to come? Again let Scripture answer. I read in the first chapter of the Acts, when they were on the mount of Olives — "And when he had spoken those things, while they beheld, he was taken up: and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet." He shall so come "in like manner:" "in the self-same manner" — is the idea conveyed in the Greek text. So then, he was conveyed to heaven by a cloud. How shall he come again? I refer you to the seventh chapter of Daniel. "I saw in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven;" in the self-same manner as he went up.

Where did he stand when he went up? On "the mount called Olivet." Where shall he stand when he shall come again in glory? I refer you to the fourteenth chapter of Zechariah. "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives" — the real mount of Olives, not a spiritual one, for it is added — "which is before Jerusalem on the east;" exactly as we find it in the present day, and the self-same spot where he stood when he went up.

Those who deny the personal reign of Christ, (which I believe,) tell us — Yes, he will come, he will appear visibly, but it will be on the day of judgment. Then I ask, what do you understand by "the day of judgment?" The idea generally is, that this earth shall be altogether annihilated, and the saints shall be taken away to another place, which is not at all defined. Now let me tell you, if this is spirituality, the Lamas of Thibet believe the same. But to Scripture we must go continually, like Luther, who said, "Hear Scripture — Scripture;" and by this Word we must sift every thing. And where is it said that this world shall be annihilated? There is not one single text to that effect, in the whole of Scripture. That it shall be purified by fire, as it was purified by water, is true; but it was not annihilated by water — only purified. So it shall be, says St. Peter, by fire.

That Christ is to come for the purpose of building up Jerusalem, is

clearly stated in the hundred and second psalm; "When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear" (in the Hebrew, "he shall be seen visibly") "in his glory" — as his glory was frequently seen by the whole nation upon Horeb and mount Sinia. That he shall come to establish a kingdom here on earth, is clearly said in the seventh chapter of Daniel: "I saw in the night visions, and behold, he came with the clouds of heaven, and there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him." That this is not to be in what we call heaven, but that his saints at that time shall reign with him under the sky, we are told in the twenty-seventh verse of that chapter: "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." And afterwards, in the Revelation, when John, caught up in spirit into heaven, hears the song of the glorified saints, which tells him what their final destiny shall be, what does he hear? I read in the fifth chapter — "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." "On the earth:" you cannot make of this earth heaven, and of heaven earth.

At his first coming Christ distinctly said to Pilate, "Now is my kingdom not from hence." Shall it never be? Again, go to the Revelation — the eleventh chapter: "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world" (which were not his at his first coming,) "are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."

In what state shall the earth be at that time? Filled with sorrow? No: it shall be a beautiful earth. Let me read to you from the seventy-second psalm. "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth. In his days" (it shall not be as at present, when the righteous are often oppressed, and the unrighteous flourish, but) "the righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea," (there is no sea in heaven,) "and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him:" I have too much experienced that it is not so now, but it is not proper in the pulpit to speak of myself; "God and nothing but God, and Mahomed the ambassador of God," is their outcry, and the defenceless traveller is frequently put to death. Shall it be

so *then*? “They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.”

But it would detain you too long to enter into the predictions of that time, when “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” I must conclude with that which shall be the song of the redeemed creation here on earth. You will find it in the ninety-eighth psalm. “Oh! sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvellous things; his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory. The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the heathen. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth; make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.”

Until that time come we have to watch and to pray. “Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly.”

At that time, the great test of our discipleship shall be, as Christ says in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, acts of benevolence — acts of philanthropy. And how can you prove that spirit better than by promoting those societies which try to proclaim Christ our Lord, and the great doctrine of repentance and forgiveness of sins in him, and his final coming in glory? There are two societies established, for which a collection will be made — the one for the purpose of promoting Christian knowledge, the knowledge of that Lord Jesus Christ who “is great,” and has proved through ages that he is great; and the other, the society for providing additional curates. I am sure you will contribute towards the support of these societies.

I am very glad to have seen you so attentive; for the coming of our Lord in glory is a solemn subject. But how much more shall you be solemnised, when you shall one day be stopped in your worldly business, and look out and hear the shout of the angels, and the sound of the trumpet — “Behold, he cometh!”

“Lo! he comes, with clouds descending,  
Once for favored sinners slain;  
Thousand, thousand saints attending,  
Swell the triumph of his train.  
Hallelujah! see the Son of God appear.”

## SERMON XIII.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY DEDICATION TO GOD.

BY REV. D. E. FORD.

“Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth.”—JER. iii. 4.

THE verse which I have now read in your hearing is part of the parable which the prophet Jeremiah set before Israel to show their transgressions and their sins, and to justify the ways of God to man in sending upon the rebellious nation the afflictions and the judgments which were about to befall them. The rebellious children, however, of that age, have long since gone to their last account: no divine remonstrances, no invitations of mercy, now sound in their ears; “the summer is ended, the harvest is past, and they are not saved.” But, my beloved young friends, God is waiting for you; is “waiting to be gracious;” has not “in anger shut up his tender mercies;” and there is repeated in your hearing the gracious invitation which sounded in the ears of lost sinners in by-gone ages. “Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?” The God of Israel is gracious as ever. Ages have not worn out his forbearance, have not exhausted his compassion, have not diminished his resources. There is the same tenderness in infinite mercy; there is the same condescension in infinite love. Nay, brethren, more plainly is his tenderness seen now than then; more strikingly is his compassion seen now than then; for “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.” And he is speaking to *you*. It is the language of him who agonized upon the cross; it is the language of him who came down from heaven to renew and sanctify the human heart—“Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?”

The Lord grant us his special help and blessing, this evening, while I direct your attention, first, to *the assumption*, and then to *the invitation* of the text.

I. First, to the assumption; namely, that the individual addressed has not said it. Look at the text. Is it not assumed that the individual to whom it is addressed, has never said, “My Father, Thou art



the guide of my youth?" "Wilt thou not from this time" do it?—"Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?" The assumption, then, is, that the person is in a state of unregeneracy, in a state of unpardoned guilt; has never given his heart to God, in a covenant which shall not be broken.

My hearers, multitudes are in this awful condition. While God is inviting and commanding and exhorting by his Word, by his Spirit, and by his ministers, they are refusing to listen; they are refusing to obey; they "will not hearken to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely." And in that condition there are some—I fear that in that condition there are many—of you. Up to this very hour, every invitation that you have heard has been in vain; up to this very hour, every command of God to which you have listened, has been in vain; up to this very hour, every promise which has invited your attention, has been in vain; you have "loved your idols, and after them you would go." Could I converse with you alone, as it has often been my happiness to converse with the young, I doubt not that many a young heart here would confess the awful fact, that the controversy between the soul and God is yet unsettled. Oh! how often have my ears and my heart been pained by the confessions, even of the children of many prayers, that they have not given their hearts to God! that they know that there is an unsettled controversy between Jehovah and themselves, and yet they can eat and drink and sleep, as though there were nothing the matter, as though there were nothing amiss! The truth is, that they disbelieve the facts of the gospel, or regard them with such indifference, or such unbelief, as almost to amount to infidelity. Ah! my dear young friends, remember that the theory of the gospel will never save the soul; remember, that a mere admission that Christ is the Son of God in so many words, will never secure your salvation, if you are withholding from him your heart. What is the difference between you and the avowed infidel, excepting that the latter is consistent in his wickedness, and you are not so? To acknowledge him in words, but to deny him by deeds; to say that he is your Father, while you are not doing the things which he commands—is but to add the guilt of inconsistency to all your other crimes. Now is it not an awful fact, that there are many of you (I wish you not to hear for your young companions, but every one to hear for himself)—is it not a fearful fact, that many of you have never yet committed one act of devoted consecration to the service of the Lord God Almighty? You have never gone to the throne of grace, and said, "Lord, here is my heart; take it, and make it thine own for ever;" you have never said there,— "other lords have had dominion over me, but by thee only will I make

mention of thy name." On the other hand, your conduct, if not your language, has been that of the proud monarch of Egypt—"Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?" Now, my dear young friends, if you for one moment suspect that this is the fearful truth, I beseech you to think of nothing else until you have settled this matter, and decided whether God is worthy of your love. If he be, give him your heart; and do it at once. If he be not, why should you trouble yourselves with religion any more? "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve; but if the Lord be God, serve him." Oh! it is a melancholy sight to see the young rising around us with no notions of piety but those of restraint, and melancholy, and dreariness; they soon throw off the restraints of early instruction, and they break loose into all manner of wickedness. And why? Because their hearts are unchanged. Why? Because their souls are unredemmed, and they have never learnt by practical experience that "the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness" and that "all her paths are peace." But oh! let us bring the young to Christ; let his love be shed abroad in their souls, and then his voice will have music for their ears, which shall for ever incapacitate them to listen to the syren song of pleasure; and then his fellowship shall have charms for their understandings and for their hearts, such as shall give them a perpetual and increasing disrelish for all worldly and improper associations.

In the neglect of the claims of God there is an amount of daring, a degree of moral madness, of which we can hardly form a conception; especially in the case of the child of many prayers, who has been nurtured in the lap of piety, who has been led to the footstool of mercy by the hand of maternal affection, and has been taught from a mother's lips to lisp the name of Jesus. I am addressing many such; and their advantages are beyond all price. It is better to be the child of many prayers, than to be the heir of a dukedom; it is better to be the child of many prayers, than to draw one's descent from a line of kings and princes. See the superior advantages with which such a person is endued throughout all his future life. That young man who has been "trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," can never pretend that religion is priestcraft, and that godliness is superstition. Many think so; and they really fancy that they are men of sense while they think so. The fact is, that this arises from their ignorance; they have never seen religion exhibited in its proper light; and as Jesus said for his murderers on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," so we say, concerning many of the proud despisers and blasphemers of the Son of God. But the child of many prayers can never be placed in such circumstances as theirs.

He has seen that religion sweetens the cup of human sorrow; he has seen that religion adds refinement to all the pleasures of which social life is capable: he knows, or ought to know, that "the ways of wisdom are pleasantness, and that all her paths are peace;" and he is left without excuse, should he neglect the great salvation.

Here, however, I would carefully guard against mistake. Let no one suppose that I am framing excuses for those who are not the children of many prayers; let no one go away from the sanctuary to-night, and say, "I feel that the warning did not apply to me, because I have had none of those advantages of which the preacher spoke." Remember, whatever may have been your birth or your parentage, you are an immortal being. Remember, whoever may have been your father or mother, you have a soul to be saved or lost. Remember, that you must give an account of yourself unto God; and it will be but a poor solace in hell to find that the mother who bare you, and the father who begat you, are companions in your misery, aiding to increase the bitterness of your doom throughout eternity. Remember, whatever may have been your disadvantages, Christ is now setting before you the light of life, that God is now setting before you the gracious invitations of his love; and that whatever may have been your neglect of the great salvation, either from want of opportunity or from disinclination, still "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." In a word, let the unconverted youth, of whatever class, pause; let him look at his standing. He is on the brink of eternity, on the brink of eternity without God and without hope: it is but another step, and he may be in ruin, in everlasting ruin, in remediless woe.

I once saw a profligate young man expire. He had been the child of many prayers, and he had wasted his father's substance in riotous living, and he was brought home to die. I visited him on the bed of death. He looked at me with anguish which I cannot describe, and said, "Why should you come to torment me?" — I think he gasped as well — "before the time?" I said, "My young friend, I am not come to torment you; I am come to tell you that there is mercy in God even at the last hour." "No mercy for me," he said; "I have sinned through all, I have neglected all, I have despised all." He was exhausted when he had made this reply. I endeavored to say a few words more, directing him to "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world;" but he said, "I cannot hear you, I cannot hear you; I am dying, and I am damned." He fetched the most hideous groan I ever heard in my life; his jaw fell, his eye was fixed, his spirit was gone to take its stand at the judgment seat. I shall never forget that scene to my dying day. And oh! perhaps there is some young



man here to-night, who is running through precisely the same course, and whose dying confession will be of the same order — “I am dying, and I am damned.”

Did time allow, I might occupy it to a considerable extent by bringing before you those varieties of character which are presented to our view by the unconverted youth around us. There are some who seem to lack but one thing; and that, the one thing needful. There are others, who are impatient of parental restraint, and anxious to forget their own responsibility in the gaieties of life and in the follies of sinful pleasure. But I stay not to classify these young persons; for I conceive that the task after all is needless. “Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat.” You may find variations of character and of creed almost to infinity. But no matter what those variations may be, how near they come to the gate of life, or how far from that gate they may be found, provided they will not enter there. Remember, that if “one thing be lacking,” that one thing is fatal; remember that “he who offends in one point is guilty of all.” I wish most distinctly to impress upon the minds of all the unconverted youth before me, that they are involved in one common ruin; that if they have not “fled for refuge to the hope set before them in the gospel,” there “remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.” There may be, and there undoubtedly will be, degrees in future punishment; for “where much is given, much will be required.” But all must perish in their sins, who have not come to Jesus that they may have life. Take the loveliest specimen of unsanctified humanity; you may admire it and praise it as you will, but that loveliest specimen of unsanctified humanity is doomed to perish, apart from the blood of sprinkling. Now does any young friend here say, “That is meant for me?” It is; I wish it so to be understood. You are trifling away your privileges, you are spurning the offers of grace and mercy through the crucified Savior; and I pray God that you may listen to this warning, and that it may not be in vain.

II. In the second place, then, I proceed to direct your attention to the invitation of the text. “Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?” Will you not say it now, supposing you have never said it? Will you not say it from this time, supposing that the whole of your life has previously been lost? The object of this discourse is to persuade you to say it — the object of this discourse is to prevail upon you to say it; and to say it, not as a matter of course, not as the result of mere transient excitement, but



to say it as the result of a stern and steadfast resolve that, whatever others may do, you will henceforth serve the Lord God of Israel.

I shall now proceed, in his faith and fear, to set before you some powerful reasons, why from this time you should say, he is "the guide of your youth."

1. My first reason shall be drawn from the claims of him who asks it. It is the Almighty God. He is the speaker who invites your confidence and demands your love; it is he who says in my text, "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?" He has said it again and again, and you have neglected the invitation. Let me ask you, does he deserve such treatment at your hands? Think of his claims, and then ask your conscience whether he does. Is it fitting that you should thus treat the Almighty God, your Creator — that you should thus treat him who loved the world, and "so loved it as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life?" — Is it meet that you should thus treat him, who "desires not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live?" Is it meet that you should thus treat him, who "willeth all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth?" You have no right to plead his designs or decrees, as a reason for your ignorance and guilt. God "will have all men to be saved;" he commands you to submit to his authority; he invites you to venture upon his love; he bids you welcome to his throne; and he says "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?" Or, if you regard the author of my text as the Savior of the world, does not he deserve better treatment at your hands? He who died for your redemption; he, who waits upon his glorious throne that he may "see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied;" he who will have you to participate in the fulness of his grace, and to submit to his authority, and to welcome his love; does he not deserve your confidence? — does he not deserve your devout affection? and will you withhold from him the spontaneous tribute of your praise? Or, if you regard the invitation of the text as coming from the Holy Spirit of God; it is he that strives with your sins, it is he that remonstrates with your perverseness, it is he that would overcome your unbelief; it is he that sets before you the path of life, that asks you to walk in it. Does he not deserve better treatment at your hands? I call upon you, then, in the name of the everlasting Father; I call upon you, in the name of him who died for the world's redemption; I call upon you, in the name of the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier — no longer to persist in this controversy with God, but to yield your heart to his service, and to do it *now*.

2. As another reason, I would set before you the dangers of delay. Remember that your soul is in peril all the while you are hesitating. Remember, too, that all additional delay makes the matter worse. You feel it difficult to turn to Jesus now; you will find it more difficult to-morrow, more difficult the day following, and so on to the end of life. There is a hardening tendency in transgression; there is a downward progress in sin, which hardens the heart, defiles the soul, perverts the judgment, and, humanly speaking, renders salvation impossible. It is the merest, and, at the same time, the most fearful delusion of Satan, that leads many a young person to conclude that he will have a more favorable season than the present for giving himself to Christ. Many pretend to be waiting for God, while God is all the while waiting for them. I have often told such, that in plain matter of fact they are not waiting God's time, but they are waiting the devil's time. God says, "*Now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation." Satan says, "To-morrow, or the day following, will be the accepted time." "Go thy way for this time," replies the sinner, "when I have a convenient season I will send for thee." I remember an incident which may illustrate and impress upon the memory of the young the danger of delays in religion. You have all heard of the samphire gatherer, whose deadly trade lies on the brink of ruin. An instance some years ago occurred in the neighborhood in which I dwelt, in which a man's life was placed in the most imminent danger whilst he was engaged in that dangerous occupation. It is customary, and in fact it is the only way of pursuing that perilous trade to advantage, for the man who follows it as his livelihood, to fasten a rope round his waist, which rope is fastened to a crow-bar that is well secured in the ground, and taking the other end of the rope to lower himself over the cliffs, perhaps from four to six hundred feet in height, swinging himself by his own exertions, so as to catch the various ledges of rock where the samphire grows. A man was one day pursuing, according to his custom, this dangerous occupation, when, with great difficulty, he contrived to swing himself on one of the ledges of rock; and in the exertion of grasping the rock, he let go the rope by which he was suspended. You see at once the imminent danger in which he was placed. There was the yawning gulph beneath; not a human being could come to his rescue from above, for no one could tell from what part of the cliff he had descended; his only chance of escape was to gain the rope, of which he had quitted his hold. That rope was of immense length, swinging from the cliff above, high in the air, coming toward him, moving further off, coming toward him again. The thought struck him that at every motion of the rope he would be left further off; he knew, that were it in a per-

pendicular line with the crow-bar to which it was affixed, it would be altogether beyond his reach, and that therefore, should he remain where he was, escape would be impossible. The only possible method of saving his life was to make a desperate aim at the rope when it came the nearest to him. Accordingly, the next time it came towards him he made a desperate plunge, and threw himself off at the height of four hundred feet, and providentially grasped the rope and was saved.— My young friends, I ask you to make that plunge now. I ask you, now, while God's salvation is coming nigh, to grasp the offers of mercy. I ask you now to close with God, to "lay hold of the hope that is set before you in the gospel." You may do it—it is coming towards you—welcome it—clasp it—hold it fast, and you will be saved for ever.

3. And then, in the third place, I would direct your attention to the final consequences of refusal. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given amongst men, whereby we must be saved." Religion is not a choice between this system and that system—between this savior and that savior; but it is the Lord Jesus Christ, or everlasting death—salvation in God's way, or everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power; and the final consequences of refusal are durable as eternity. God has decreed, that that which a man sows he also shall reap; and that he who "sows to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." Oh! what a fearful harvest is that which the lost soul will infallibly reap in hell!—and that harvest shall still be "bringing forth fruit unto death;" so that through interminable ages the woe of the lost shall only be begun. And all this for rejecting—what? Not the service of a tyrant, but of the ever-living God. All this for rejecting—what? Not the unreasonable demands of one who hates our species, and scatters misery and death through his vast dominion, but of one who loves sinners; and so loveth them, as to give his only begotten Son to suffer and to die for their redemption. If any thing can add sharpness to the pains of hell, it must be the recollection that all this is borne in consequence of such infatuation—in consequence of such madness, as that which put away salvation, and refused eternal life. There would be something tolerable in damnation itself, were the hopeless sufferers doomed to it by a decree from which there was no escape; there would be some solace in the thought—"Well, whatever I had done would have been in vain, for the gates of eternal life were barred against my admission." But oh! what will it be for the lost soul to find that the "head and front of his offending" was this—he would not go to Christ, he would not have Christ to "reign over him;"



he deliberately put away eternal life, when God's own hands placed it within his reach, and offered it for his acceptance.

4. In the fourth place, I would set before you some encouragements to hope. From the observations which I have already addressed to you, I would have you draw this conclusion, that your only chance of salvation is in instantaneous submission to Christ. And it is not a mere chance, it is a certainty; for "God is faithful;" — and the acceptance of the sinner depends on his faithfulness — "who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." The awakened sinner, then, needs not go to the throne of God with a bare peradventure as to the question of his acceptance; he may be certain that God will accept him. God is more willing to bless the penitent than the penitent to receive his blessing — is more willing to clasp in the everlasting arms of his mercy the prodigal, than the prodigal is to leave the husks eaten by the swine, and throw himself at his Father's feet. Wherever unwillingness may be found, there is no unwillingness on the part of God. He is saying, "Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die?" And he is saying so to every unconverted hearer this evening. He is saying so especially to the young, who have not yet given their hearts to Christ. He is inviting them to do it now; he is inviting them from this very hour — from this very service, to say, each for himself, "My Father, thou art the guide of my youth." And, my dear young friends, what a kind father God will be! It was my happiness, first to bow before his throne with acceptance in my early days; and the only regret I have in relation to that matter, is, that I did not sooner bow before him. Oh! if I can persuade the youngest child here, who is capable of listening to this discourse, that Christ is waiting for him — that God is waiting for him — that the Holy Spirit is waiting for him, I shall not have labored in vain, or have spent my strength for nought. I am persuaded there is a great mistake in the church of God concerning the possibility of youthful piety and of youthful devotion. I am thoroughly persuaded, as the result of long experience, that it is no mere proverb, no mere parable in which the psalmist says, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." Many a Christian parent has overlooked the most valuable part of early education, under the vain imagination that the time was not come to lead the heart of his child to God. So soon as the child is capable of understanding the outline of the gospel — so soon as the child is capable of knowing what was meant when the Savior said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven" — so soon can conversion take place,



and so soon can conversion bring forth its appropriate fruits, and put to shame "the enemy and the avenger." My dear Christian friends, you who are parents, agonize with God for the salvation of every one of your children, until "Christ be formed in them the hope of everlasting glory." To be nursing "vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction," oh! what a mournful task! And yet this is what many a Christian parent is undoubtedly doing; and doing, because he has never aright regarded his responsibility, or the claims of Christ. The parent should account every child that is given to his care, as coming from God with this express declaration, "Take this child and nurse it for me." Oh! for that care — for that piety — for that devotedness, which shall make every Christian father and every Christian mother, a father in Israel and a mother in Israel, rearing seed — godly seed — for the church of God, and for his heavenly kingdom. It is marvellous indeed — it is marvellous indeed, how indifferent some Christian parents are to the religious condition of their offspring. I have sometimes been shocked, when on asking religious parents concerning their children, they have replied, "We have no hope of them at present, sir, but they are but young as yet." Oh! the devil takes their hearts in early days, and why should not Christ have them? If they are old enough to love the service of sin, and the pleasures of the world, they are old enough to love the service of Christ, and to know the pleasures of devotion. I know that some faint-hearted and timid Christians will marvel at the agony and holy piety and devotedness which will lead a Christian parent to mourn over his little one who as yet gives no signs of a decided conversion. But why do the faint-hearted so censure? Simply because they believe not the facts of the case. No man would censure for his intensity of feeling, no man would censure for the utmost extravagance of manner, the poor man who was standing in the street while his house was in flames, and was watching the operations of the firemen as they were raising their ladders to the topmost windows, where his wife and children were all imploring help, and expecting every moment of delay to be fatal, and to sink them into the yawning gulf beneath. Every heart would glow with sympathy, and every hand would be stretched out to rescue the sufferers. But if a man be indeed anguished because his wife and children are unconverted, why is he censured? Because mankind heed not the declarations of God; and therefore heed not the "lake which burns with fire and brimstone." They are ready to give the man their sympathy, whose wife and children are in danger of perishing in the flames, for they believe the fire will burn; but they charge that man with enthusiasm who feels, and deeply feels, the condition of his unconverted friends and

relations. But, my hearers, shall we care for the opinions of the world? The day is coming which will prove who are right and who are wrong; but until that period, as Christians who "know in whom they have believed," by all that is sacred, by all that is glorious, by all that is triumphant in the sacrifice and mediation of Christ, we are bound to labor, and to labor to the utmost, for the salvation of souls.

But, to return. Let none go away from the sanctuary to-night, and say, "I am no longer a child, and therefore the warning of the preacher did not apply to me; I own that I am unconverted, but I am not a youth, and therefore the invitation of mercy, as sounded in the text, is not intended for my ear." My dear friend, I beseech you, in God's name, go not away with such an impression as this. The matter is worse for you; one of God's promises has lost its force; wait a little longer, and all his promises will be by-gone things. You can no longer make him the "guide of your youth," for your youth is past; wait a little longer, and there will not be one promise in his word to encourage you; wait a little longer, and you will not have one opportunity of flying for refuge to lay hold on the hope that is set before you. Take warning from the fact that a part of God's mercy is gone for ever;—take warning from the fact that a part of his invitations can give no longer utterance and warning. Take warning. Oh! fly for refuge now, while one promise is left—while one hope of mercy remaineth. God has not yet in anger withdrawn his graciousness, he has not yet in anger shut up his tender mercies; but he soon will. And let no one say, I am clear from my obligations, because though I once was the child of many prayers, my parents have long since ceased to pray for me. Ah! they have been in heaven, perhaps, these many years; and the last parting regret of their souls, as they left this world, was that their sons, that their daughters were unconverted. But, imagine not that any length of duration can obliterate the obligations, which press, and shall forever press upon your souls. The years of Methuselah would not even weaken them. Live and die unconverted, and eternity itself shall but perpetuate them for ever and ever. Refuse the gospel, trifle a little longer with the salvation which is thus set before you, and you will infallibly perish in your sins; and as God is in heaven, your portion will be in hell for ever. And do not think that yours will be mere damnation. Yours will be damnation under the most awful, under the most aggravating circumstances, which we can conceive; and when ages of interminable suffering shall have rolled away, the fresh coruscations of ever-burning light shall mark your locality in hell; and the lost spirits look down, and Tyre and Sidon, yea, and Sodom and Gomorrah, shall shudder in the distance as they pass

by, and see the severer doom that greets the child of many prayers. Once again, what is done must be done quickly. If you had a mere chance of inheriting a large fortune, and the limitation of that chance turned upon a little delay unknown to you — say that the application must be made within a hundred days, or that the application must be made within seven years — let me ask, is there one of you who would let to-morrow's sun set on the world without having made sure of his claim, without having made it sure without uncertainty and without delay. Surely your soul deserves that which a little property would not be denied; surely the Lord Jesus Christ deserves that which Mammon would at once have as his tribute; surely if you would be thus anxious to receive a little of this world's wealth, you must be equally anxious, you ought to be equally anxious, to secure the great salvation. The truth is, if you will not answer in the affirmative to the question of my text, "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?" I fear that the concealed evil in your soul is infidelity, which you would not own, but which you fondly cherish. You believe not that God has spoken to you — you believe not that he will speak to you in accents of thunder by and by. But you must believe, and that right soon. You may now close your eyes against the brightest revelations of the Son of God; you may now stop your ears against the sound of salvation, and trifle with redeeming love; but remember that your eyes and your ears will be unstoppered, and that very shortly you will behold the Lord "coming with clouds," and that you will "wail because of him." There will be no infidelity then; there will be no avoiding his gaze then. In vain shall you "call upon the rocks to hide you, and upon the mountains to cover you from the wrath of the Lamb," which shall "come upon you to the uttermost;" and in vain shall you attempt to close your ears — those ears which have refused to listen to the invitations of redeeming love — in vain shall you attempt to close your ears against the awful thunders which shall say, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." The lost spirit will then say, "Well, I never thought it would come to this; I only intended to neglect the salvation of my soul for a little season, I never intended to neglect it altogether; God is my witness that I did not intend for ever to neglect his Holy Spirit; I wanted only a little of this world's pleasure; I wanted only a little of this world's sin; I saw that others had been recovered after they had gone as far, or a little farther than myself, and I took courage from their example; I never intended to perish in my unbelief, I never intended to reject finally the grace of God. But oh! what a mistake have I made! I went a little too far; I went



beyond the verge of mercy. God had long tolerated me, but at length he said he would tolerate me no longer; he said — ‘I will bear with the transgressor no longer; my ministers, let him alone; Providence, let him alone; my Spirit, let him alone;’ and the result is that I am lost. Here I am, and here I must be for ever.” My dear young friends, shall it come to this? Shall it come to this, after all that you have heard, after all that you have felt, after all that you have received? Shall others press into the kingdom of God, and shall you be shut out? Shall it be said of some of you, “Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out?” Shall you be among them? You will, you infallibly will, in God’s name I tell you you will, unless you answer in the affirmative the question of my text, “Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?” God is sincere in asking it, the Holy Spirit is sincere in asking it, Christ is sincere in asking it. Will you doubt the sincerity of the Almighty? will you dare to trifle a little longer and a little longer with the great salvation? Well, then, in conclusion, mark my words. You may forget all this sermon now, but you will remember it in hell. Nay, nay, I will not undertake to say that you will remember my poor arguments and weak illustrations there; they are poor and weak indeed, compared with the awful truth; but this I will undertake to say, you will remember my text there, you will never forget it. It will be written in your conscience as with a pen of iron in letters of living fire; you will remember, that then, that there, that at this time, God said unto you, “Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?” — and you dared to say, “O Lord, I will not have thy guidance; O Lord, I will not accept thy salvation, I will have none of thy counsel, I reject thy reproof.” Remember, that if you make this hard bargain, you must stand by it, and none will have a right to complain. Remember it is your own doing; for God invites you, heaven invites you — will you not repent, will you not be saved?

In conclusion, I tell you I have no hope of your conversion to God, if your reply is, “I will think of this matter.” I have no hope of your conversion, if your reply is, “I will meditate on this matter when I go home.” Do it now. God is waiting. Now let the resolve ascend to his throne, before the last hymn is over, before the service closes. — Let the answer be made to God now — “My Father, I will say unto thee, ‘thou art my guide;’ my Father, I will consecrate my body, soul, and spirit unto thee. Thanks, immortal thanks to thy name, that I have the power to do it. I bless thee that I am not in hell; I bless



thee that I have not perished in my sins ; I bless thee that I have not sinned away the last hope of mercy, and that thou art waiting to be gracious ; and now, after having tried thy patience so long, I will try it no more. My Father, be thou the guide of my youth, my portion and my hope, my guide even unto death." Amen.

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## SERMON XIV.

### GOD'S LOVE TO THE WORLD.

BY REV. W. ATHERTON.

" For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—JOHN iii. 16.

THE chapter now before us contains a variety of important and interesting matter. In the beginning we have an annunciation, accompanied by a solemn asseveration, which is enough to make any man thoughtful ; in the conclusion, we have a denunciation which is enough to make any thoughtful man tremble ; and in the interval, we have glad tidings of great joy, suited to all people. In the *commencement* we hear it said by Jesus Christ, " Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This is enough to make any man thoughtful ; especially when we consider that it is addressed to an old man — to a religious man — to a master in Israel ; and that it was necessary to tell even him that he must be born again. In the *conclusion* of the chapter, we are told — " He that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him." — This is enough to make an unbeliever tremble. Then, in the middle of the chapter, we have indeed tidings of great joy ; for it is said, " God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world ; but that the world through him might be saved. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up ; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.— For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The coming of Jesus Christ into our world ; the work he performed ; the redemption which he effected ; and the greatest events the world ever knew, or of which men can ever be told. This was the great object of creation — the grand design of Providence. This event was revealed to men by the holy prophets, announced by the voice of an-

gels, recorded by the pen of inspiration, and is of the greatest importance to us. The words of the text lead us to consider,

### I. THE OBJECTS OF GOD'S LOVE.

“God so loved *the world*.” This expression has various significations in Scripture. Sometimes it means *the globe on which we live*, — the earth which we behold, with all its various scenery, its furniture, and the animals by which it is inhabited. Thus it was said, “He was *in the world*, and the world knew him not.” “He came into *the world* to save sinners.” But while heaven is God's throne, the earth is his footstool. Much as it is desired; much as it is idolized; much as it is pursued; — this world is the most despicable of all God's creatures, — it is that on which he sets his feet. And yet men set their hearts on the footstool, while they might have the throne. The words of the text cannot apply to this.

By this term we sometimes understand *the Gentiles* in every nation, age, and circumstance, as distinguished from the Jews, who had a revelation of the true God, the knowledge of his will, and the services of his law; while the rest of mankind, the Gentiles, were in the grossest ignorance, addicted to the vilest superstitions, and sunk into the most sensual idolatries that ever disgraced men. Thus we read, “If the fall of them,” — that is, the Jews — “be the riches of *the world*, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness?” Here the words “world” and “Gentiles” are evidently synonymous. And again: “If the casting away of them be the reconciling of *the world*, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?” Here, also, the term “world” means the Gentiles. Now “God so loved the world,” — the Gentile world — a world perishing in ignorance and idolatry, that he gave his Son to die for them.

The term means, also, *the ungodly part of mankind*, as distinguished from believers who have “passed from death unto life.” Thus, Christ said to his disciples, “Ye are not of *the world*, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” Believers are not of the unenlightened, carnal, unregenerate world. They are separated from it, hated by it, opposed to it; and these are reasons why they should not wish to be united to it.

The term most commonly signifies *all mankind* — every child of Adam. In this sense we read, “*the whole world* lieth in wickedness;” — “*the whole world* is become guilty before God.” And in this extended sense we understand the term in the text. This sense fully accords with all the attributes of Deity, and is well supported by the

united testimony of the Holy Scriptures. Hence, we are told that Christ "loved the church, and gave himself for it;" and again, that he "died for the ungodly;" and the ungodly and the church include, of course, *all sorts* and conditions of men. "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." The term "the whole world" is only employed twice in the sacred volume: and on both occasions by this same apostle. First, he says, "the whole world lieth in the wicked one;" and again,— "Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world." We can assign no reason whatever why the words should not be understood in the same sense in one place as in the other. But we are told, also, "if Christ died for *all*, then were *all* dead; and he died for *all*, that they should henceforth live unto him." The same "all" that were dead in sin, is the "all for whom Christ died." Again: "He gave himself a ransom for *all*." "*All* we like sheep have gone astray; the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all." The same "all" that had gone astray like lost sheep, was the "all" whose iniquities were laid on him. And lest still we should suppose that "all men" meant only a part, we are expressly told that "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for *every man*."

Here, then, we have a ground for hope. We are the objects of God's love. Men can only exclude themselves from his compassion by wilful obstinacy and unbelief. God has given a commission to his ministers to go "into all the world, and preach the gospel to *every creature*;" and "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Let us consider,

## II. THE NATURE AND DEGREE OF THIS LOVE.

1. *Its nature.* But in speaking of the nature of this love, it is much more easy to say what it is not, than to say what it is. It could not be a love of *complacency*. We love objects on account of their excellency, or their beauty, or their fitness to make us happy. But in man there is, by nature, no moral excellence, no rectitude of principle, no beauty of holiness. His nature is depraved, his principles are corrupt, his actions are defiled, his soul is black with pollution, the whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint; he is so destitute of every particle of righteousness that he has nothing to cover or conceal the nakedness of his nature. God must, therefore, look upon such a creature with the greatest abhorrence.

It must, therefore, be a love of *pity*. He looked down from his high and holy habitation, and saw that men everywhere were filled

with all unrighteousness, stung by the scorpion sin, writhing in anguish, lying in the regions of death, sinking to everlasting misery! He beheld man ignorant of all that is necessary for him to know, and none to teach him. He saw him amidst the most splendid and costly sacrifices, unable to present a suitable atonement for the sins of his soul. He marked him ardently pursuing pleasure, yet finding no satisfaction. He saw him about to sink, the prey of death and hell, while there was none to rescue, none to deliver. In this state he pitied him; he alighted by him, as he lay in his sins and in his blood, and he said, "I have loved thee in thy lost estate, and have sent my Son, my incarnate Son, to rescue and redeem thee!"

This love was *unmerited*. The men to whom it is manifested saw no need of it, made no effort to obtain it, did not even seek it. If a pious act, a good word, a gracious thought, would have merited heaven itself, man had it not to give. On the contrary, men despised, rejected, scoffed at the proffered good. "Behold," said John, "what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!" What manner of love? Why, a love unmerited, free, every way worthy of God.

It was *disinterested*. When we hear that God loved the world, we are not to suppose that he gained any thing by it:—no, he made no acquisition to his authority; he increased not the extent of his dominions; he made no addition to his knowledge, to his happiness, to his essential glory. All these he possessed in infinite degrees before. Were God to blot out of existence every creature he had made, or were man to damn himself to everlasting misery, the happiness of God would experience no diminution. And were he to create innumerable worlds, people them all with seraphs or archangels, and bring them all to worship in his presence,—still this would add nothing to his essential glory. The riches of his glory are the same from eternity to eternity, and are incapable of either rising or falling. He could not love the world from a motive of interest: therefore man, and man alone, derives the benefit. Notice,

2. *The degree of this love.* It is so high, no thought can reach it; so deep, no mind can fathom it; so extensive in its range, no tongue can declare it.

*The gift itself* bespeaks its greatness. "God so loved the world, that he gave"—what? a throne of light?—No. What? some servant of his presence, some first-born son of light?—No. What?—He "so loved the world, that he gave *his* Son—his begotten Son—his only-begotten Son; the brightness of his own glory; the express image of his Father's person; the heir of all things." Such love as this cannot be told: the Redeemer himself does not attempt to tell



us; he has put an eternity of meaning into this particle "so," and has left it for the eternal study and admiration of angels and of men. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son."

*The subjects on whom this love is bestowed* raise its degree. "God so loved *the world*," that is, *men*: who, when spoken of in comparison with their Maker, are called worms, grasshoppers, nothing, less than nothing, and vanity; mere clods of matter, with a spark of mind, mysteriously united by the Deity. And yet, this man, this worm, this nothing, this less than nothing, and vanity; man, sunk in sin, a daring rebel against God in his heart and in his life, leagued with Satan, opposed in all things to the authority and law of God;—this insignificant, unworthy man, God so loved, as to meditate and devise his recovery to favor, to happiness, to eternal life.

We learn the degrees of this love, also, *from the expressions of the Redeemer towards his enemies*. See him going to Jerusalem for the last time;—Jerusalem, a place pre-eminent in cruelty, "the slaughter-house of God's servants;" and in less than a week, perhaps, to become the place of his own execution. He overlooks the malice of the Pharisees, the treachery of Judas, the infidelity of Peter, the cowardice of all his disciples, the cruelty of his accusers, the ignominy of the cross, the pain of death; and he fixes his eyes on the vast inundation of wrath which was coming on the devoted city. He might have looked on all this with feelings of joy, as a just retribution for the loss of so much blood. But no: he gazed on the approaching wrath; his eye affected his heart—his heart affected his tongue, and, with strong compassion he cried—"How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" He sees his mistaken accusers met together to demand his innocent blood; he hears them loudly clamor for his life. He does not call for a legion of angels at once, to sweep them to the hell they deserved; but spends his last breath, and sheds his dearest blood, to buy pardon for his murderers! Nor did he forget them after he had ended his life. He commissioned his disciples to go and preach to them;—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel in my name, *beginning at Jerusalem*." It might rather have been thought that he would have said, "Go to the outcast heathen; visit the abominable Gentiles; penetrate to the very ends of the earth;—these, though they have sinned deeply, have not sinned against such mercy and grace. But come not near that ungodly race, the dwellers in Jerusalem. They have slaughtered my servants, the prophets; they have taken the head of John the Baptist, whom I sent, to reward a lascivious dance; last

of all, they have wickedly shed my blood. If you should visit *some* of the lost sheep of the house of Israel, yet enter not Jerusalem; let not the gospel pass through those gates, through which they led me, its Author, to shed my blood." But no: — he said, "Go to Jerusalem; and, to show the value of my gospel, the efficacy of my atonement, the power of my love, — go there *first*. Let those who shed my blood be the first to taste its healing virtue; let those who troubled the waters be the first to participate in their valued influence; let those who struck the rock be the first to drink of its salutary streams. Go to Jerusalem; and, should you in your wanderings meet the poor wretch that thrust his spear into my side, tell him that the wound he made has opened a cleft in my heart sufficiently wide to take him in; and that the blood and water which he caused to flow, has sufficient virtue to pardon and purify him. Begin at Jerusalem; — the inhabitants thereof lately said, 'His blood be on us, and on our children.' And so be it! but not in vengeance on their heads, but in all its virtue to soften, and in all its efficacy to save! Let it be on their consciences and on their hearts, making them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

The degree of this love appears, also, *in the extent of the Savior's sufferings*. From the manger to the cross, he became "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." He personally experienced pain and want; he had "not where to lay his head." His words were perverted; his actions were misconstrued; his miracles were ascribed to an influence he hated. He was betrayed by a chosen companion, abandoned by his friends in the hour of distress, and forsaken by his heavenly Father! See him pressed down, crushed, and groaning beneath the weight of woe and sin! What horror of darkness, what anguish of soul, was ever to be compared to his! The Father has forsaken him! A child has grown up before his parent, "as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground;" he has grown up to perfection, and become the object of his delight — his only joy! But this child is taken suddenly, dangerously ill; the disease makes rapid and malignant progress; it threatens to take away the delight of his eyes, the joy of his heart. The parent sees the progress of the disease; he marks the ravages it makes; and his feelings keep pace with its progress. He sees his child in the agonies of death; he witnesses his struggles; he hears his sighs; the last gleam of his eye fastens on his father, while, in his last agony, he cries, "Father, help me! father, save me from this hour!" And what is there which such a father would not do for such a son? Now, behold this scene realized. See the agony of the Savior! Mark him in the dark, cold night, prostrate on the damp garden, bedewing the earth with his tears; groaning through the

distress of his soul; sweating "as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground;" piercing heaven with his cries, and saying, in effect, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me! Save me from this hour!" The Father hears the agonizing supplication of his Son, and yet he turns away. Nay, he appears to frown upon his Son in the depth of his anguish; and, while he frowns upon his Son, he turns a smile of mercy on a half damned world! But follow him to the consummation of his pains; see him ascend the rugged hill of Calvary. Mark how they pierce his hands and his feet! He weeps, and the drops extinguish the sun! He sighs, and his sigh rends the rocks! He groans, and his last groan causes the earth to tremble! All nature sympathized, and owned the presence of the Creator of the world! "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son."

Then, *the number of the subjects of this love* shows the greatness of its degree. "God so loved *the world*," — all mankind. This love is unconfined, unlimited. "Whosoever believeth," — in whatever age or clime, — whatsoever his national, civil, intellectual, or moral distinctions; whatever the nature, the number, the magnitude, the repetitions of his iniquities. As all need the exercise of this love, so to all it is offered; as all need, so all may have it; as "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," so "whosoever believeth" need not perish, but may have "everlasting life." This love extends to all.

### III. THE DESIGN OF THIS LOVE.

It is that we should "not perish, but have everlasting life." Here, 1. Observe, that *for sin the world deserved to perish*. This is the true state, the natural condition of the world; it is actually perishing.

The word "perish" has reference sometimes to *the death of the body*. Thus the affrighted mariner said to Jonah, "What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we *perish* not;" that we lose not our lives — that we be not engulfed in the ocean. As all have "sinned, and come short of the glory of God," the sentence of death has passed universally on all: — "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." No man can expect to be exempt from the attack of death. But, through the merits of Christ, God has determined that man shall not utterly perish: that he shall not ultimately and for ever see corruption. Jesus Christ hath "abolished death;" he has destroyed its power; he has obtained a victory over it. The monster, death, shall be made to disgorge his prey. To the believer in Christ, death is converted into a sleep; he can scarcely be said to die; he rather falls asleep in the arms of his



Lord ; while he hears God saying to him, in effect, "Fear not to go down into the grave ; for I will go down with thee, and will bring thee up again. Fear not the cold earth, the gnawing worms, the disgusting putridity ; I have entered the grave before ; I have sanctified it by my presence ; I have converted it into a bed of roses. I will bring thee up again. If thou goest down in weakness, I will bring thee up again in power ; if thou goest down in corruption, I will raise thee up in incorruption ; if thou goest down a natural body, I will bring thee up again a spiritual body, amazingly refined, astonishingly improved. I will change thy vile body, and fashion it like unto my own glorious body. Thus, thou shalt not perish, but be raised to life eternal."

The word "perish" is expressive sometimes of *mental misery*. When the prodigal is represented as far from his father's house, it is said he was ready to perish. Every unregenerate man is destitute of peace ; he has no mental satisfaction ; he is the slave of sin ; the drudge of Satan ; under the tyranny of evil passions and appetites ; distracted by a guilty conscience ; an "alien from the commonwealth of Israel ; a stranger to the covenant of promise ; having no hope, and without God in the world." Now, God has given his Son, that we might not thus perish ; that Son has suffered death that we might be redeemed ; that we might be delivered from the powers of Satan and the world ; that we might be brought into the possession of peace ; that our wants might be supplied ; and that we might have true satisfaction and lasting joy.

The word "perish" means, also, *everlasting condemnation*. Thus it is said, "As many as have sinned without law, shall also *perish* without law : " and again, — "The Lord is long suffering, not willing that any should *perish*." This sense of the word includes banishment "from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power ;" it is to be damned without the possibility of ever rising ; it is the being doomed to "the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death ;" it is to feel the gnawing of the worm that "dieth not," and the scorching of the flame that is not quenched ; it is to suffer the bitter pains of everlasting death. Every man, by reason of sin, is doomed thus to perish, both body and soul, here and everlastingly. But through the free pardon, which is bought by the blood of Jesus Christ, and received by faith, he is so delivered that over him the second death has no power.

2. But, on the other hand, he shall "*have everlasting life*." This everlasting life has a beginning in the present state : it commences while the soul is yet united to the body. Man, by nature, is "dead in trespasses and sins : " all his powers are under the influence of a moral



paralysis: he is incapable of spiritual actions and enjoyments. But, through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, fallen man is quickened: his understanding is enlightened to see his state; his heart is softened; his various powers are brought into exercise; pious resolutions are formed; peace takes possession of his conscience; hope springs up in his breast; he flees for refuge "to lay hold on the hope set before him." Thus he is passed from death unto life: he is raised "from a death in sin to a life of righteousness."

This life has its existence in the soul, *in virtue of a vital union with Jesus Christ*. It is a life which is infused by the gracious influence of the Holy Ghost. It consists of joy, peace, hope, love, holiness, and the prospect of life everlasting. He who has this, *has* a life of the same nature with the future, though it is inferior in its degree. Hence, it is called the earnest, the first fruits, the foretaste: the same life that he shall have in future, he has now in part; the present is a drop of that mighty ocean.

This "everlasting life" includes *the fulness of joy which is at God's right hand*—the pleasures which endure for ever more. This includes a nearer and fuller view of the Redeemer, a closer union with the Father of our spirits. Every hindrance to serving God will be fully removed; every desire will be enlarged and fulfilled; every thing that is evil will be put out of the way; the soul will be filled with bliss and happiness unutterable, and endowed with a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." In consequence of sin man lost all right and title to this life; but through the death of Jesus Christ, and the benefits of his death, man may be brought to rejoice in all this. Let us consider,

#### IV. THE WAY IN WHICH WE MAY BE INTERESTED IN THE BENEFITS OF THIS GIFT OF THE REDEEMER.

That we may "not perish, but have everlasting life," believing is indispensably necessary.

The word *believing* is sometimes to be understood in a simple sense, as expressing an act of the mind. To believe is neither more nor less than to *take God at his word*.

1. We must believe the record God has given us *of man*. And what is this? Why, that he is ignorant, wicked, depraved, dead; that "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint;" that in his flesh dwells nothing that is good. When we understand, believe, and feel this, it humbles our proud spirits, induces true penitence of heart, and urges us to flee for refuge from the wrath to come.

2. *We must believe the testimony God has given of his Son*. And

what is this ? That he was equal with God ; that he has “ borne our sin, and carried our sorrow ; ” that he has satisfied the demands of the divine justice ; that he has healed the honors of the broken law ; that he has “ finished transgression, and made reconciliation for iniquity ; ” — that he has obtained salvation for us at the hands of his heavenly Father. To receive this testimony aright, is to believe that Jesus Christ is made over to sinners as a complete and willing Savior. A sure trust and confidence in this ; a firm reliance in Jesus Christ, as made a sin-offering for us ; as coming to free us from condemnation, and save us ; this is the faith which brings comfort and peace into the soul.

And there must be a *continuance* in this. This will give us power over every sin, and victory over every temptation, till our natures are conformed to that of Christ ; till our lives are formed upon the model of his ; till “ as he was, so we are, *in this world.* ” So that, in order that we “ may not perish, but have everlasting life,” we must believe, and continue to believe ; “ the life that we now live in the flesh,” must be “ by faith on the Son of God ; ” and the faith we exercised at first we must continue to exercise, till we receive the crown of life which is laid up for us in heaven.

From this subject we may,

1. See *the evil of sin.* It must be a great evil, a grievous and a bitter thing, when it required such a sacrifice — such sufferings — to make an atonement for its commission. For if God had given *more* than was necessary, it would have been as unworthy of his wisdom as if he had given too *little*. If God gave his only-begotten Son, it was absolutely necessary he should so do, in order that we might “ not perish, but have everlasting life.”

2. See *the value of the soul.* Most men think little of their souls ; the body engrosses all their care, while the soul, — compared with which the whole world is but as a grain of sand, — is totally neglected by them. Yea, they can give their souls to the devil, with both hands, as a free-will offering ! “ The redemption of the soul is precious.” Go to Bethlehem ! visit Calvary ! see the darkened sun — the rending rocks — the opening graves — convulsed nature ! and in the sufferings of the incarnate God, discover the value of the soul, and learn to say, “ What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul ? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? ” And think, also, what is all that you can do for the bodies of your fellow-creatures, in comparison with saving a *soul* from death !

3. See *the condemnation of sinners.* Notwithstanding all that God has done, the mass of mankind are careless, wicked, depraved, seeking death in the error of their ways. And are there none here who are

in danger of perishing? of perishing amidst the blaze of light — amidst the calls of mercy — amidst the displays of love? These men rush on the loaded artillery of heaven! they are despising the overtures of mercy, levelling the mountains which infinite goodness has thrown up to prevent their ruin, opposing the swelling tide of divine love, which would set full on their souls, and, with lighted torches in their hands, forcing their way to eternal ruin! Surely theirs will not be ordinary pangs! If those who hear the gospel perish, they must, as it were, take hell by force, and be lost, spite of all God's love could do to prevent their ruin! O brethren, privileged as we are in reading and hearing this truth — “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;” let it not become as a millstone about our necks, to drag us down to the depths of perdition!

4. See the encouragement afforded to those who are seeking the Lord — those who are weary of sin, and of the service of the world, the flesh, and Satan. Like the prodigal, they are come to themselves; they are alive to a sense of their condition. Seeing their ingratitude, their rebellion, they exclaim, “My iniquities are more in number than the hairs of my head! I am a grievous sinner! I am unworthy of the least of all God's mercies!” All this is true, very true; and it is also true that God loves thee — loves thee with a love of pity and compassion — and is not willing that thou shouldst perish. O believe the record of heaven! believe the record that God has given of his Son! — believe that Christ came into the world to seek and save the lost — to save sinners, even the chief! Receive this record; cordially grasp it with all thy soul. Say, “It is worthy of all acceptance! it is worthy of *my* acceptance!” God enable thee so to believe, that thy soul may live for ever!

5. And if God “spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also *freely give us all things?*” He will surely give an answer to our every prayer, and supply our every need. Let us, then, honor him by our implicit confidence. “My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus.” From this love let believers fully expect grace here, and glory hereafter.

6. And who is there among us that can think on all this love, and not wish to *make suitable returns?* Who does not say,—

“What shall I do, to *make it known*  
What thou for all mankind hast done?”

Should it not be proclaimed to the ends of the earth? and should it not be made known in our own land? and that, not only by preaching

— by the distribution of the sacred Scriptures — by the circulation of religious truth ; but also by the education of the young ? It has been found that by schools, and by *schools on the Sabbath day*, habits of order and decency have been induced, the most valuable instructions have been communicated, and a powerful influence has been exerted to save souls from ruin. These schools have been found a very powerful engine for preventing much evil, and for promoting a great deal of good. They have been in use for half a century ; and they have been greatly increased and supported by the liberality of Christians. This is a strong proof that they have been, and are, useful ; were it otherwise, they would not be so supported. One object we have now in view, is to promote the interests of a Sunday school in connexion with this chapel. It was established in the year 1791 ; the year in which the venerable John Wesley died. Since that period 14,731 children have passed through its instructions. They have received the light of knowledge, and some of them the light of life ; some have gone from this world, after having brought forth fruit to the honor of God on earth ; and others are still walking upon earth, in the fear of the Lord, and the comforts of the Holy Ghost. When it is considered that this has taken place in the dense and dark population of Spitalfields, we think it will be duly appreciated. There are 350 children at present in the school. When we think on the length of time this school has been instituted ; on the many children who have passed through its instructions ; on the number of pious and intelligent persons who have been engaged in this work, some of whom are, perhaps, bending from their lofty thrones on the present occasion, to see how the recital of the Redeemer's dying love influences your minds in reference to the support of this school ; — we cannot but hope that you will render it all the assistance in your power. God has loved you : he has proved his kindness to you in ten thousand instances, as to your own persons, your substance, your families, your friends. And see what he has brought you through ; and how bright he has made your prospects for another world. Surely you are saying — “ What shall I render to the Lord for all his mercies ? ” What ? why render love — love for love. God has loved you, and he requires your love in return. He addresses you as he did his servant formerly, and he addresses you personally, and he addresses himself to your hearts — “ Lovest thou me ? ” And if you say, “ Lord, thou knowest that I love thee ! ” he replies, “ *Feed my lambs.* ” Some of these children, it may be, are bereaved of their parents : they are almost outcasts of the world ; but they are the tenderlings of Christ's flock : he calls them to himself ; he bears them in his bosom ; he intends to bless them ; — but he honors his servants, by



allowing them to take these lambs under their care. If you regard his authority, if you have tasted of his love, attend to his injunction, and return the love wherewith he has loved you, by feeding his lambs. Supply their minds with knowledge; make them acquainted with his truth and guardianship; and do all that is needful to support those schools, which profess to accomplish this great object. And what you do, do *from a principle of love to Christ*; do it, also, out of love to your fellow-creatures, and an earnest desire for the welfare of posterity. And what you do, *do it with all your hearts*, and with all your might. “God will not be unrighteous, to forget your work and labor of love;” and you shall receive from him happiness here, and life everlasting!

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## SERMON XV.

THE SPIRITUAL BUILDING.

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BY REV. ISAIAH BIRT.  
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“In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the SPIRIT.—EPHESIANS ii. 22.

THE gospel ministry, in all its departments, is conducted on the same principles. Whether it be stationary or itinerant; whether it be pastoral or missionary;—these principles are ever the same. These principles are very few, but very important. They relate to *all men*—to all without distinction, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free, kings or subjects;—they consider all as far from God; that the whole world “lieth in wickedness;” that “there is none righteous, no not one.” This is the first principle of a gospel ministry; it contemplates every man as a sinner, exposed to wrath and indignation. These principles relate to Jesus Christ also. This ministry exhibits the Lord Jesus Christ, in his person, his offices, and his works, as the great, the only Redeemer, appointed for salvation by God, to the ends of the earth. We must also consider the ministry of the gospel as relating to *the means*, under divine influence, *by which a church is to be formed* out of this world, set apart for the worship and service of God upon earth, and finally to be made like him, and be with him, and enjoy him for ever.

These principles are ever exhibited in the ministry of the gospel.—And in order to confine them in our view, the church of God is repre-

sented under a variety of similitudes. Sometimes it is considered as a sheep-fold ; and the sheep are gathered by his care, watched over, provided for, and blessed for ever. In the words before us, it is represented under the idea of a building. " Now therefore," it is said to the Gentiles, who were once considered as different from the Jews ;— " now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God ; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone ; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple in the Lord ; in whom we also," both Jews and Gentiles, " are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Seeking the divine blessing and assistance, we will employ ourselves this evening in contemplating the church under the idea which is given in the text, as " builded together in Christ for an habitation of God through the Spirit." We will, *first*, take notice of the materials of this building ; *then*, we will attend to its basis and plan ; *thirdly*, we will contemplate the instruments and agency employed in its construction ; we will *next* consider the end to be accomplished in its erection ; and *finally*, we will return to ourselves, and endeavor to enforce on our own hearts what is important in connexion with the words of the text. And O that we may be blessed of God, and that it may be the mercy of every one present to be united to the church here, and to share in its glories hereafter !

#### I. LET US CONTEMPLATE THE MATERIALS OF THIS BUILDING,

1. *In their nature.* They are of a very superior order. In all buildings there are some materials which are comparatively insignificant, some unimportant, some unsightly. But if we examine Scripture, in reference to the materials of this building, we shall find that it selects the most precious materials,— gold, and silver, and precious stones, on which men set such a high value. And yet all these images fall short ; gold, and silver, and precious stones, are not worthy consideration, when compared with human souls — with the children of men — the sons and daughters of Adam. If we consider man in reference to the eternal world, he is a being of a superior order. If we regard him in relation to angels, he is, in many respects, similar, and is capable of sharing in their enjoyments and delights. If we contemplate him in reference to God himself, we see him formed for intimate communion with him. You can find no being superior to man, except angels ; and indeed, when we come to be united to the church, we are said to come " to an innumerable company of angels ;" and when, in the Revelation, John tells us of the glories of the celestial city, we find

that "all the angels stood round about the throne ;" and when redeemed men from every part of the world uttered their ascriptions of praise and thanksgiving to God and the Lamb, for the blessings of redemption, we find the angels united with them, as though they were but one company, — united with them in their acclamations — and added a hearty "Amen" to their sublime doxologies. Contemplate these materials,

2. *In their diversity.* There is a great diversity in every building. If we were to examine the building in which we are now assembled, we should find in it a great variety of materials of a very reverse description. So it is in this building of God ; it is composed of persons of every possible variety ; "of every nation, and kindred, and tongue." Scripture does not confine the blessings of the gospel to any one class — to monarchs, or to the poor only ; but when the inhabitants of the celestial city were shown to John, he was informed that they comprehended persons of all descriptions — kings and their subjects, bond and free, Jews and Gentiles, and even slaves. For the distinctions which prevail, and properly prevail, amongst men, have no place in heaven whatever. No ; it is *man* — man in his sinfulness — man in his spiritual, his undying nature — man in the endless diversities of his earthly condition, — that is contemplated by the gospel. No man can stand and survey this building as it rises, and say, "I can never become a part of that building ; I am so dry a tree, that I can never be cut and fitted ; I am so rough a stone that I can never be squared and polished !" No ; all may be made fit. Even amongst the angels we find a great diversity ; for we read of "thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers ;" and these angels all join to form a part of this glorious building. Contemplate these materials,

3. *In their number.* This is exceeding great. John tells us that he saw "a great multitude which no man could number." O how pleasing is the consideration ! When we considered their diversity, this was pleasing ; this led us to entertain hope as to all our fellow-men ; but here is number also — a great number — "a great, an innumerable multitude, out of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues." God has done much more in this respect than we are aware of, or are sometimes willing to allow. We are ready to suppose, as Elijah, that there are very few who serve God ; whereas, God had, at that very period, "reserved to himself seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." There are multitudes we know not of, who are preparing for glory, for honor, for eternal life. "In my Father's house," said the Savior, "are *many* mansions ;" and multitudes out of every nation — multitudes which no human power can

calculate,— will be collected to inhabit them. The principles which men have adopted to limit their views of the number of the redeemed, appear to me as calculated to expand our ideas considerably ; they are the choice of the God of love, the purchase of the benevolent Redeemer, and they are an exceeding great number. Contemplate them also,

4. *In their circumstances.* These are very unpropitious. The angels, who are to become a part in this building, are all prepared and fitted for their places ; but men — they are like the trees in the forest, or the stones in the quarry, or the ore in the mine. The trees must be felled and squared ; the stones must be dug out and polished ; the ore must be brought out and purified, before it can be ready to form any part of this building. And then contemplate these materials,

5. *In their value.* And can you estimate this ? It is impossible ; it is like thinking of space, or of God himself. Christ has given us some idea of their value, when he said, “ What is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? ” One soul — the soul of the poorest man — the soul of a poor negro slave — *one* soul — is of more value than the world ! But if one soul be so valuable, how shall we estimate the value of the vast mass of mind which goes to compose the church of the living God ? What is gold and silver ? what are precious stones ? — what shall we put in competition with human souls ? with these minds — these minds capable of feeling, of thought, of suffering, of joy ? And when we add to this, eternal duration — an eternal duration in joy or in suffering, O how immense is the value of immortal souls ! None but Jesus Christ can estimate the value of these materials — the value of immortal souls.

## II. LET US ATTEND TO THE BASIS ON WHICH IT RESTS, AND THE PLAN ON WHICH IT IS CONDUCTED.

1. There have been experiments made by angelic and by human minds, but they have both failed. *Angels* were tried in heaven, and they failed ; *man* was tried under most propitious circumstances on earth, but he failed ; the foundation which might have been supposed to have stood, failed, and the building came down. But what is the foundation on which this building rests ? Ah, you anticipate me here ! It is Christ ; it is Christ himself ; Jesus Christ is the chief corner-stone. As it is said in Isaiah, “ Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation.” And, says Paul, “ As a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation ; and other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” This, then, is the base of this building ; on his person, on his work, on



his mediation, on his sufferings, on his exaltation, on his government, — the whole building rests. If he fall, the structure for ever falls; none can raise, none can sustain it, but he! This is the base — the most important part; this is the foundation which God has laid in Zion.

Now here Jesus Christ appears to us under the idea of *correspondence*. There is in him that which is most suitable for this important purpose. He is said to be “head of all principalities and powers;” but little is said, it is true, of *angels*; and yet we are given to understand that he is their head and support. But he is intimately allied to *us*; he is “bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.” He has done all that is necessary for our salvation: he has died for our transgressions; he has brought in for us an everlasting righteousness; he has risen to heavenly glory; he is seated at the right hand of his heavenly Father; and he is now carrying on the blessed work. And he is capable of supporting all this vast concern; for Paul says, “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” There is a correspondence therefore, between the work and his character. Were he man, he might fear a giving way of this building; for even angels in heaven were not able to stand. But when we consider that the fulness of the Godhead is in him, and that he is “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,” we see in his merit, and in his perpetual existence, a sure foundation for the confidence and salvation of all the sons and daughters of men. From age to generation, the materials have all been brought here, and here they have rested.

2. Christ is not only the basis — he is also spoken of as *the chief corner-stone*. Not only do all the parts rest upon him; but in him they are all united; — in him they are all united to each other, to the holy angels, to himself, and to the Divine Father; all are one in him. God never could, I was about to say — it is certain God never has met with man, but in Christ; it is here men and Christ meet, and it is here men and men meet in harmony as one. We are ready to suppose that the church may be formed under this or that denomination, or according to this or that creed. No, no; these never unite hearts and souls together; these never unite man to God, nor man to man; but let men come to Christ; let them be one with him; and then they are united to God, and united to the whole church.

3. Christ is not only the basis and the union of this building, but *the whole building is constructed by him*. All the lines are drawn from him, from his dignity, from his glory. In the preceding verse we read, “In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” The building will partake of the

character of the foundation ; it will not be a grand and noble foundation, with a small and insignificant structure erected upon it. When we consider the person of Christ ; his work ; his groans, and tears, and sufferings, and death ; his glory, and his power ; and when we call to mind that he is heir of all things, and head over all ; — we may rest assured that the building shall be noble, extensive, and grand.

4. *The excellencies of Christ will be the beauty of the building.* The church is built in him ; Christians are all lively stones, and he lives in them and through them. He is not only the foundation on which the church rests, and the corner-stone by which it is united, and the pattern according to which it is framed ; but “ the head-stone of the corner,” the crown, the ornament of the whole. The beauties and excellencies of the Savior will appear in all his church. When he comes in glory, it will be “ to be admired in his saints, and to be glorified in them that believe.” When the whole work is completed, all will be glorious, and beautiful, and excellent ; and he will appear the chief beauty, and glory, and excellency of all.

III. LET US CONSIDER THE INSTRUMENTS AND AGENCY BY WHICH THIS BUILDING IS CONSTRUCTED AND CARRIED ON.

There is something very sweet and interesting in the contemplation of this work ; especially when we feel that we have an interest in it ourselves.

*How extensive is this work!* It is carrying on in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, in America ; and it is carrying on in the celestial world also. Does it not immediately strike you that it requires a *universal presence*? an agent that must be present everywhere, both in earth and heaven, in order to carry it on ?

*How arduous is this work!* It is a work of most astonishing labor and engagements. To gather in all the materials for this building, however scattered, and to adjust them all, however rough and unfit ; O, this is a great work ! When the far-famed Jewish temple was to be erected, Solomon was employed in the work ; and he was endued with astonishing wisdom, with great power, and with extensive riches, for its accomplishment. But O, what wisdom, what power, what resources, are required to collect and adjust the materials of this building ! But the time would fail me to enumerate the difficulties of this work. O, when we consider what is in each of our poor wicked hearts ; and the influence of the world ; and the subtlety of Satan ; — we may well conceive that it requires no less than a *creative power* ; not wisdom and power in an ordinary ratio ; not a power and wisdom to collect materi-

als already fitted and prepared ; but a creative power to make all things anew.

Think of the time required to carry on this work. It has been going on from the first periods of time, through all succeeding ages and generations, to the present ; and it shall be continued as long as time shall last. Men have been very busily employed ; they have been born, and lived, and flourished, and died. Thrones have been set up and cast down. Empires have been formed, have arrived at the zenith of their glory, and have disappeared. But this work has been going on from generation to generation, and the last stone shall not be brought forth till the last moment of time. There is, therefore, a *perpetual agency* required. In this work patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs, kings and their subjects, the learned and the powerful, the wise and the good, have been variously employed ; but they were merely instruments ; they were called to their day's work, and then taken to their reward. Stupendous providences, also, have been employed ; but these have only been as means ; and these were laid aside when they had accomplished their design. But this great agent, he works from first to last, without relaxation, without intermission.

This is the agent pointed out in the text ; the Holy Spirit ; the wise, the almighty, the omnipresent, the infinite, the eternal Spirit ; an agent that ever lives, and ever works. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." He is the great agent ; instruments are used and laid aside ; providences are employed and overruled ; but he is the great agent who worketh all in all. And,

#### IV. LET US NOTICE THE DESIGN TO BE ACCOMPLISHED IN THIS WORK.

It is "for an habitation of God." What was the design of the erection of the Jewish tabernacle in the wilderness? It was to be God's residence; there the Shechinah was to be placed;—and so it was intended with respect to the temple which was afterwards built by Solomon. But these were only symbols, types, shadows ; *this is the temple, the habitation of God, where he will dwell. This is the tabernacle, the temple, the Zion, of which God has said, "This is my rest for ever ; here will I dwell ; for I have desired it."* But how shall we speak aright of this ? "It doth not yet appear what we shall be ;" we may think of all that is good, and great, and blessed, and give it the happiest expression ; and when we have done all that we can, we are still at the threshold ; we are still compelled to say, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." We may, however, say something,

1. *As to its perfection.* This habitation of God will display the

utmost perfection ; nothing that is polluted shall enter into it. It was said of God's earthly temple, that it was "the holy place, the tabernacle of the Most High ;" it was the abode of Deity. This gives us an idea of the most perfect purity. A just idea of God's earthly temple leads the saints to say, "A day in thy courts, with all our imperfections, is better than a thousand spent elsewhere." O then what will be the place where the blessed God dwells ; the tabernacle which he makes his eternal abode ? Nothing that is impure, nothing that defileth, can enter there. The words of the text convey an idea also,

2. *As to its vast extent.* Have you ever considered what the Apostle says,— "He hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body ;" then mark "the fulness of him *that filleth all in all.*" O, what wonderful ideas does this language convey to our minds ! This habitation will not only be holy and pure, but of vast extent. "The fulness of him that filleth all in all." O, this infinitely surpasses all our ideas.

3. It shall be *holy and exquisite love.* All will be alike, when brought to form parts of this habitation of God. There will not be two different principles — two creeds — two parties — two feelings ; no ; all souls, all sentiments, all feelings, all hearts, will be alike. Saints and angels all uniting and united ; united in bonds most sacred, most blessed, most endearing, most perfect. There will be all that can unite the thoughts and the heart, all that can endear the affections. All will be brethren, and amidst them all the Son of God, "the first-born among many brethren ;" he will have "the pre-eminence ;" but it will be the pre-eminence of a brother and a friend. And, O, say, what will be the blessedness of such a state of mind, of such a state of feeling, of such a state of holy, of blessed love !

4. *A state of supreme delight also.* We can form but little idea of delight in the present state ; our delights are chiefly either from recollection, or from anticipation. The flame of delight is but weak and languid at the best, while we are on earth ; but in the temple of God it will burn with a full and steady flame. There the *great Father* of all will contemplate all his designs completely fulfilled ; every obstacle to the manifestation of his kindness will be for ever removed ; and all his heart will be continually overflowing to his creatures ! He will bring all his fulness to bear upon their souls to render their bliss complete, while all that is contrary to their happiness, and bliss shall be entirely done away. Then *the blessed Redeemer* shall "see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied ;" all the fruit of his toil shall be gathered ; all his children shall be brought home, and he shall receive his full reward ! He remembers Calvary, in all the blessedness and



glory connected with it ; he is filled with sacred delight, and all his people share it with him. And what shall we say of *the saints themselves* ?

“ O the delights, the heavenly joys,  
The glories of the place,  
Where Jesus sheds the brightest beams  
Of his o'erflowing grace ! ”

Ah, shall I be there ? Ah, my friends, will you be there ? O, what a full tide of joy will pour into the souls of the saints, when the joy of each in this vast multitude will contribute to the joy of all ! For there will be no selfish feeling ; the delight is a common stock ; the joy of one will be the joy of all, and the joy of all is the joy of each individual. Each one will say, “ This God is our God for ever and ever ! This Lord is our Lord for ever and ever ! ” With what feelings shall we remember our trials and difficulties here, and praise the love that has brought us safely through ! This will be delight infinitely beyond the best that we ever formed any idea of. Like the Queen of Sheba, we shall say, “ the half was not told us — the thousandth part was not told us ; ” it will be beyond our warmest wishes, and infinitely surpass our most fervent prayers.

5. It will be *a state, a presentation of the most unspeakable glory*. What is said by the beloved disciple ? “ I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with man, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God.” — “ And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it : for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” O, the ineffable glory and blessedness which is to attend the consummation of the union which is now formed between Christians and their blessed Lord !

#### V. LET US CONCLUDE THE SUBJECT WITH A FEW REFLECTIONS.

We must not dismiss the subject without these. I have, in part, anticipated them, it is true ; but it is worth having a second, and a third, and a fourth, and a continual impression of them upon our minds.

1. *Have we been saved ?* Have we been delivered from the world ? Have we been built on Jesus Christ ? Has the gospel produced any effect upon our minds ? Is there any evidence that Christ is our foundation ? Have we come as sinners to build upon him ? Ah, my friends ! these are questions of the first importance ; and a period will

arrive, in your experience, and in mine, when these questions will put all others in the shade. When we come to death — and we are coming to it, and coming nearer and nearer to it every day — and when the judgment-seat and eternity, with all its realities, bursts upon us; these will be questions of the very highest consideration. O, be concerned to be partakers of Christ, and aim to be built upon him! He is the only refuge, the only foundation of security and salvation.

“None but Jesus  
Can do helpless sinners good.”

There is “no other name under heaven whereby we must be saved.” Let this inquiry be carried home to our hearts, and let the effect of it enter into our lives. It will be sure to come to us at some period, — O let it come NOW!

2. *As God honors human instrumentality in carrying on this blessed building, how concerned should we all be to be employed in it!* Let each say, “Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do in this blessed work?” If there be a possibility of one arriving at that state of blessedness, and then saying — “In yonder great world, where I lived for many years, I never did any thing, I never gave any thing towards the carrying on that glorious building, which is now the joy, the admiration of all! While the servants of Christ were employed in the most laborious exertions, I never did any thing; while they made the greatest sacrifices, I never gave any thing; while they united all their energies, I had no hand whatever in the work!” O, if it be possible for shame to come across the cheek of a redeemed man, how would he then blush! O let us, and especially those who have the blossoms of the grave upon us, let us employ our time, our talents, our all, in this work. We are *all* called to do something — to carry stones or timber to the building, to dig stones out of the quarry, or to hew and square the wood. I might *beg* of you this evening, but I will not. Read the text, and meditate upon what is connected with it; and then withhold, if you can, if you dare, all that this great and good cause claims at your hands.

3. *It should be our concern to live, and labor, and die, fully assured of the glory of God, and the glory of the church.* Amidst all the trials of this militant state, amidst all the ravages of death and the grave, and amidst all the ruins and convulsions of the world, the church of Christ shall stand. Nothing shall ever be able to cast it down. For the divine honor, for angels’ joy, for man’s good, it shall stand, — for men, for angels, for God, for ever and ever! AMEN.

# SERMON XVI.

OPPOSITION TO CHRIST.

BY REV. W. JAY.

“He that is not with me is against me.”—MATTHEW xii. 30.

My brethren, the ministers of the gospel are liable to many reflections, and they are not always of the same character; yea, some of them seem perfectly opposite to others. Sometimes they are censured for being too lax in their preaching; and when they proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ, and the efficacy of his blood as together able to cleanse from all sin, and the glory of his righteousness as able to justify the ungodly, and invite all, even the chief of sinners, to come to him as they are, and to be blessed with all spiritual blessings in him — oh! this is *dangerous*; this is *licentiousness*; and these, if they are not *ungodly* men, are *deluded* men, who turn the grace of God into licentiousness, and teach their hearers to “sin, that grace may abound.”

Then, on the other side, they are condemned as being too strict, too severe; and when they require persons to deny themselves and take up their cross and follow the Savior, and to crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts, and to mortify the deeds of the body, and to become not only moral, but godly and Christian, and *entirely* godly and Christian — “oh! this is a hard saying, who can bear it?” But the question is, whether it is a true one. We wish to be always tender, but we dare not to be unfaithful — unfaithful to God, unfaithful to souls, unfaithful to our subject. And what saith the Scriptures? Whose lips said, “straight is the gate, and narrow is the road that leadeth to life, and few there be that find it,” whereas, “wide is the gate, and broad is the road that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat?” Whose lips said, “*He that is not with me is against me?*”

Our subject, therefore, this evening is, *Opposition to Christ*. The disgracefulness of being against him; the danger of being against him; the possibility of being against him, and the evidence of being against him. “Consider what we say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.”

I. The DISGRACEFULNESS of being against Christ. In order to make this appear a little, you will observe —

That nothing shows men more than their attractions and aversions. Mark the objects of their choice and of their preference; see with whom they most readily and pleasingly associate; and then call to remembrance the adage, "Tell me a man's company, and I will tell you his character." Congeniality is the inducement and the bond of union. To be against some individuals would expose you to general indignation. Which of you would like to be opposed to a Thornton, a Reynolds, a Howard, a Leighton, a Fenelon? But here we have the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person. What a picture of Christ have the four gospels given us! Look at it; and then suffer me to ask, is there any being in the world odious enough to be against him? He is possessed of all excellencies; all the excellencies found in creatures separately and imperfectly, are found in him combined and complete. Take all that was innocent in Adam, all that was tender in Joseph, all that was meek in Moses, all that was patient in Job, all that was zealous in Paul, all that is good in the spirits of just men made perfect, all that is wise in the innumerable company of angels; and even the *aggregate* would be no more to his glory than a drop to the ocean, or a ray to the sun. To be against him is, therefore, to be against all truth, and righteousness and peace, against the glory of God, and the happiness of mankind.

Again: nothing is more unreasonable, vile, and shameful, than to oppose a Benefactor and Friend, who has laid you under peculiar obligations, upon whom you had no claim, and who has yet spared no expense, no pains in order to serve you. O Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world! what do we owe thee! To thee we owe the bread we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe.

"There's not a gift thy hand bestows,  
But cost thy heart a groan."

If we are allowed to remain in the land of the living, it is owing to thy intercession on our behalf; if we have been redeemed, it is with thy precious blood; and if we have entertained a hope of a better world, thou hast altogether inspired it. And, my brethren, he asks — and he has a right to ask — "For which of these good works do ye stone me? Is it because I remembered you in your low estate? Is it because for your sakes, though I was rich, I became poor, that ye through my poverty might be made rich? Is it because I bare your sins in my own body on the tree, and died that you might live?" Against him! Be against the benefactor who plunged into the flood to save you from drowning; be against him who generously paid your debt, and released you from the confinement of the dungeon, and re-



stored you to the bosom of your family; be against your father, who has been laboring to train you up and provide for you; be against your mother, who bare you, and at her bosom fed you; and you would be a thousand times less infamous than you are when you are against him. Were there in mankind the same ingenuousness in religion as in other things, they would all, every one of them, shun you; they would consider you the disgrace and the scandal of the universe. The apostle Paul was not revengeful; he was the most compassionate man alive; and yet when he came to reflect on the case, he made no scruple to say, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha."

Let us now look —

II. At the DANGER of being against Christ. There are three questions which we must address to you concerning this. The first of which is —

Can you *overcome* him? Did ever any succeed in opposing him? Is it not the question of Job — "Who ever hardened himself against him and prospered? Did the old world? Let the deluge tell. Did Pharaoh? Let the plagues of Egypt and the closing waves of the Red Sea tell. Did Hiel, the re-builder of Jericho? Let the death of Abiram his first-born, and the death of Segub, his younger son, tell. Did the Jews? Let their dispersion and sufferings to this hour tell. "If," said they, "we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation." They said, It does not seem right to put him to death, but state reasons require it — expediency requires it; we must perish, or he must perish. Foolish policy! and all policy is foolish that is not founded in justice. And were they preserved from the evils they dreaded by crucifying him? The crime drew down upon them the very thing, and the Romans came, and with such cruelty and slaughter as never distinguished them in any of their wars, and wrath came down upon them to the uttermost.

This is an emblem of all those who oppose him. And therefore, the psalmist says, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision." "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." And so will it be with all his adversaries. War is the most uncertain thing

in the world ; and wisdom says, " Let not him that putteth on the armor boast himself like him that putteth it off. And the Revelation says, " These shall make war with the Lamb ; and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is King of kings, and Lord of lords." And what are they ? Worms on a dunghill, tampering with their ruin, their breath in their nostrils, and themselves crushed before the moth. And this is the case even in their combination too. Hand may join in hand, but they will not go unpunished. God has said of the Messiah, " The kingdom and the nation that will not serve thee shall perish ;" and it matters not how learned or how powerful such kingdom and such nation may be. If they will stand opposite the designs of Christ, if they will hinder the spread of the gospel, if they will endeavor to suppress the circulation of the Scriptures, if they forbid the liberty of conscience, if they endeavor to maintain a system which his honor and his truth require to be destroyed, let them do what they will, their doom is sealed, and their destruction is certain.

But, my brethren, we wish you to think, not of nations, but of *individuals* ; we wish you to think, not of Popish countries, but of *yourselves*, and to remember your own danger, and that the Savior has said, " As for these mine enemies that would not that I should reign over them, bring them forth, and slay them before my face."

If you cannot conquer, let us ask another question :

Can you *endure* him ? This is his own inquiry — " Can thy heart endure, or can thy hand destroy, when I shall deal with thee ?" And it is answered by every thing in Scripture ; or rather, indeed, it is not. " It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God ;" but none of the sacred writers attempt to tell us *how* fearful ; they felt they were unable. His is a wrath accompanied with Almighty power, and with boundless resources. As for the rage of man, it is limited ; limited as to time, limited by the very nature of the subject, limited by the capacity of the infliction. But there are no such limits *here*. Men may destroy the body, and there is no more that they can do ; but there is eternity in *this* punishment ; there is the soul with him to destroy ; yea, there is the body to be revived to share in the misery. " He is able to destroy both body and soul in hell ; I say unto you, Fear him."

If you cannot conquer, or if you cannot endure, let me ask —

Can you *escape* from him ? Is there a *moral* possibility of your escaping from him ? Does not the truth of God forbid the supposition ? Does not the justice of God forbid it ? Does not the holiness of God forbid it ? Has he not said, " The unrighteous shall not inherit

the kingdom of God?" Are these his sayings? and is he a faithful God? Why, the only hope that some of you can indulge in, is a hope that God will be found a liar, and his Word a lie. What a forlorn hope is this! What a world of evidence have you to overcome before you can lie down and enjoy repose! Or is there any physical possibility of your escape? Civil justice is no more omniscient than it is omnipotent. How often do criminals elude justice! How frequently, when they are pursued, do they conceal themselves! When they have been in prison, they have broke through the walls; and when they have been fettered, they have filed off their chains and have escaped. But, my brethren, there is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord. "He that fleeth of them shall not flee away, and he that escapeth of them shall not be delivered." "Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down; and though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them; and though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them; and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good." "How," says the apostle — "How can we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

Let us notice —

III. The POSSIBILITY of being against him. For there are many who will be ready to say, Why, he was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father; he dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him; the heavens have received him; and he himself said, "I am no more in the world;" how, then, can any oppose him now? To this we answer, that, consistently with these admissions, there is a sense in which he is *now* in the world, so that if you wish to show your dislike towards him you can do it, and if you wish to show your love you can do it.

Observe, first, he has a people, and they that persecute *them* persecute *him*. Witness his address to Saul of Tarsus; "Saul, Saul," said he, "why persecutest thou me?" He was not persecuting him *personally*, but relatively, in his ministers, and in his followers. It would be in vain for you to say to a man, "I do not injure you," and then wound him in the arm or the foot. Why, are not his members himself? And our Savior says, "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye." It would be in vain for one to say, "I am not against you," and then injure your wife or your children. Why, *they*

are you. And Christians are his bride, and they are his children; and he will avenge himself of their persecutors and of his own. Hence says David, "He has bent his bow, and made ready his arrow, to shoot the persecutors."

This opposition very early begun. You remember that Cain slew his brother Abel; and wherefore did he slay him? Because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous. The principle, therefore, is not confined to any age of the world; the nature of real godliness is always the same, and will provoke the resentment of human nature, which also is always the same. Acts, indeed, may vary according to circumstances. The spirit of our constitution and government is friendly to the rights of individuals; our profession and religion, therefore, does not expose us to the penalties of death, and stripes, and imprisonments, and fines. But our forefathers endured all this; and we should call those days to remembrance, and be grateful for our own advantages. "But the *tongue* can no man tame," saith the Scripture; and "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." And when the mouth is silent from decency, the carnal mind is enmity against God; and there will be always instances of persecution, therefore, which no legislation will be able to restrain or prevent; showing that as it was then, so it is now—they that are after the flesh, persecute them that are after the Spirit.

Again; he has a cause in the world; and this cause is the gospel of our salvation, infinitely dear to him, and every way beneficial to man, whether considered individually or socially, personally or relatively. We defy any history to produce an instance of an abiding, consistent, real change of character and of nature, accomplished where the truth as it is in Jesus, or the doctrine of the cross, has been denied or rejected, in any province, or village, or individual. But what was accomplished in the first ages of Christianity? What marvellous changes! Did not Corinth know? Did not Rome know? Did not Thessalonica know? Did they not always witness these amazing transformations of character for the better? And to this very day the same results follow. There the gospel came not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen. The drunkard has become sober, and the swearer has learned to fear an oath, and the Sabbath breaker has "called the Sabbath a delight; the holy of the Lord, honorable;" and men who were before a burden to themselves, and a curse to the neighborhood, delivered from the tyranny of their evil appetites and passions, and from the stings of a guilty conscience, have been called, and softened, and refreshed;



and having obtained mercy, have found it their happiness to diffuse it.

And yet how this gospel has been opposed! When the mariner's compass and other useful discoveries were made known in our country, how were they hailed in their errand! But how has it been with the gospel, which is infinitely the greatest blessing which the human race ever possessed? How has it been opposed as if it were a pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that cometh at noon day! Why? My brethren, the secret can be explained. The gospel is the enemy of self and sin. The gospel offends the pride of human nature, by considering all upon a level naturally, and affording only the same salvation for all, regardless of any difference of station or of character; and it excludes all boasting, so that if any man glory he must glory in the Lord.

And it also offends because of its sanctifying influence. Men love to be lawless; they love to stand with David's vain ones, who said, "With our lips we will prevail; our tongues are our own; who is lord over us?" Many of them indeed may be willing to part with those sins, to which they have no temptation in their constitution or in their external calling; but the gospel requires you to pluck out a right eye, and to cut off a right arm, and to part with your bosom lusts. There are some who would be willing, like Herod, to do many things if Herodias was still allowed them. But the fact is, the gospel allows no sensual indulgences; it teaches "to deny *all* ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in the present world."

Again; he has also a providential agency on earth; and the dispensations of his providence are designed to promote the purposes of his grace. He does all that is done in the affairs of nations and of individuals. It is he that makes our cups run over, or that breaks our cisterns, so that they can hold no water. It is he that gives us health, or sends sickness. It is he that suffers our children to be about us, or destroys the hopes of man. All these are designed to allure us to himself, or to constrain us to seek a better, even a heavenly country, and to forsake the foolish and live. But all this, you see, is vain; men oppose him in his smiles and in his frowns; and they say by their tempers, if not by their lips, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways."

IV. Let us notice the EVIDENCE of being against him. For if it be allowed to be possible that men can be against him, there are some who seem to think that it is a very *improbable* thing. So it has fre-

quently been supposed, and some of the heathen moralists have said, that if ever virtue appeared visible, it would engage the esteem and admiration of all mankind. There was one exception to this opinion. Socrates differed from his brethren in many particulars: and Socrates, having expressed his idea of a perfect character, ventured to predict the treatment he would be likely to meet with if he appeared in our world. He contended that his practice would be so peculiar, that his reproofs would be so unwelcome, that his endeavors to reform and reclaim men would be so importunate and irksome, that mankind, too degenerate to bear either his example or his reproof, instead of loving would hate him, and probably persecute him, and (how remarkable that he should use the word! not *put him to death*, but) *crucify him*.

Now was this a judgment according to truth. Such a character did appear in our world; he was the image of the invisible God; he went about doing good, and good only. And how was he received? He was "despised and rejected of men." "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not." "The world," said he to the Jews, "cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify that its deeds are evil." "Marvel not, if the world hate you; you know that it hated me before it hated you."

"I would not have been against him," some are ready to say, "if I had lived in the days of his flesh." So the Jews said while they were adorning the tombs of the good prophets their fathers had persecuted; they said, "Had we lived in the days of our fathers we would not have persecuted them," while they were involved in a course far more criminal. Their ancestors had only shed the blood of God's servants, while *they* were imbruing their hands in the blood of his own Son.

Again; when you hear of persons being against Christ, you think of tyrants, of Neros, Julians, and Voltaires, of infidels, profligates and blasphemers, of murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers; all these beings are against him. But do not deceive yourselves; the charge comprehends many characters distinguished by nothing of all this; the charge embraces thousands who never swore an oath in their lives, thousands who never broke a promise to their fellow-creatures, perhaps, in their lives, thousands who have regularly attended on the means of grace, who have always on the Sabbath repaired to the house of God to hear the preaching of the Word; and therefore, perhaps, there may be some — oh! my God, there may be many in this very assembly; for what says he who cannot be

deluded, and who cannot deceive? "He that is not with me is against me."

You have heard much of antichrist. The word signifies *against* Christ; and this has been applied to Popery, and very justly, for what can be more against Christ than nearly the whole of their system? But John says, "Even *now* are there many antichrists;" therefore there may be antichrists among Protestants as well as among Papists. A Socinian is an antichrist; a sinner trusting in his own righteousness is an antichrist; so is every mere formal professor who is holding the truth in unrighteousness.

The question therefore is, Are you *with* him? Are you with him in sentiment, in disposition, in action, in pursuit? Are you with him as scholars are with their teacher, as servants are with their master, as soldiers are with their commander, as subjects are with their sovereign? Does he occupy the highest place in your regard? Does he dwell in your hearts by faith? Do you say, "Other lords besides thee have had dominion over me, but henceforth will I make mention of thy name?" And do you feel what is done against *him* as done against *yourselves*? And are you "sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden?" And does the reproach of them that reproached him fall on you? And do you tremble when you hear his precious name blasphemed? and do you rejoice in the advancement of his cause? and are you praying that his kingdom may come, and that his Word may have free course and be glorified? and does this simplify your life, and does it regulate it? Are you willing on this altar to offer all adverse interests? And are you concerned to make every thing not only subordinate, but subservient to his praise? Alas! how many are there here—and they know it—who are not with him; and we know therefore that they are *against* him, for this is the doctrine of our text.

Let me, therefore, men and brethren, remind you, in conclusion, that this is an awful truth. There is no neutrality in religion. There are cases in which neutrality is possible; there are cases in which it may be excused, if not admired and commended. In family disputes, and in the quarrels of your neighbors, it may be wise and well to keep neutral. If you do no good by interfering, you may do evil; and that is no little thing in a world like this. Two nations may wage war against each other, and waste their mutual resources, whilst a third, however urged, may remain neutral, securing its subjects, and husbanding its wealth. Some have thought the excellency of a senator to be, that he belongs to no party. I once thought the same myself, but I do not now; I see that things are now in such a state that a

man *must* take a part, that he can do nothing now as a neutral, whether in politics or in religion, having no influence with either party. Let him, therefore, choose his side, and avow it; and let him be as moderate on his side as possible, and endeavor to improve his side as much as possible; for you will see all that comes between, falling down between both parties, both of whom they disown, and both of whom disown them.

But if it were not so, I repeat it again, there can be no neutrality *here*; and this cannot be repeated too often. "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other; ye cannot serve God and mammon." "Whosoever, therefore, will be the friend of the world, is the enemy of God." "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Let me therefore recommend to you faith in this decision. There are many people who speak as if the Bible had said nothing; whereas it has said *all*. They say, "If we are not so good as some, we are not so bad as others; and if we are not friends, we are not enemies." But what does he say? It is not the opinion of the prisoner, but the opinion of the judge, which is to be consulted in such cases as these. A magistrate one day said, "I was yesterday attending for hours on a villain who was accusing a scoundrel, both of whom ought to have been hanged on the same gallows." Nothing can be more disagreeable than to find persons who are all in the wrong disputing among themselves who is right. Why, at the deluge persons could be drowned any where, but there was only one ark to save them. There is only one way of salvation now, but there are a thousand ways of destruction. It matters not, therefore, what you are, or what you do, if you are destitute of faith and real holiness; for our Savior has said, "He that believeth not shall be damned;" and "without holiness," says his apostle, "no man shall see the Lord."

Make this, therefore, the standard of your inquiry; and do not observe it casually; consult it when you are alone, and ask whether it accuses or acquits you — whether it condemns or justifies you. I know not, my dear hearers, how you hear, but when I hear such a question as this, it often shakes my hope to the centre, and I go down from this desk, trembling lest after preaching to others I myself should be a castaway. Endeavor, therefore, to be decided; do not rest in negatives; remember that you are not only required to "cease to do evil," but to "learn to do well;" "that every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit," though it bring forth no bad fruit, "is hewn down and cast into the fire;" that the servant who



was wicked, and because unprofitable was therefore cast into outer darkness, was the man who had one talent, which he did not abuse, but wrapt it up in a napkin. There is no medium between loving Christ and hating him. When the dispute is between God and Baal, there is to be no halting between two opinions. "I would," says the Savior, "thou wert either cold or hot; so then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth."

But there are some, blessed be God, who *are* with him. This is their glory, and this should be their joy. Are they with him now? They shall be with him for ever. Are they now suffering with him? They shall also reign with him. Are they now with him in the reproach of the cross? They shall soon be with him in the glory of the crown. Are they now with him in the toils of the fight? They shall soon be with him in the triumphs of victory; and he will fulfil his Word—"Him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I overcame and am sat down with my Father on his throne." "You are they," says he, "who have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." You are on the safe side; you are on the rising side; you are on the side which by-and-by will annihilate the opposite side and become a universality. You are with him—are advancing with him. Here is the Savior, here are his people; they are weak, but he is almighty; he is at their head; therefore be not afraid to go forward. Ye infidel powers, and ye spiritual wickednesses in high places, bring forward all your forces; we challenge you in the face of the universe. You know we began our course at the lake of Galilee; we drove you before us to the east and the west, to the north and the south; the kingdom of God was established in spite of you, and mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed, and does still. Do not you see, all your efforts have only covered you with shame? In a little while it shall be said, without a figure, "Behold, the whole world is gone after him." The Lord hasten it in his time!

But where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? At present Jesus is upon the throne of grace; oh! that I could urge you immediately to apply to him there! Though your sins were as scarlet, they should be white as snow; though they were red like crimson, they should be as wool. He says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will

abundantly pardon." Here is his own proclamation; these are his proposals. Oh! that you would believe him, and throw down the weapons of your rebellion, and confide in the word of a prince, that if you come in and submit yourselves you shall obtain life and peace. Oh! if you did but know his bands and cords of love! Oh! if you did but know the liberty of his service! Oh! if you did but know how easy his yoke, and how light his burden! Oh! did you but know the blessedness of those who know the joyful sound and walk in the light of his countenance, and in his righteousness exalt themselves! Surely you would immediately repair to him. Oh! let me entreat you, let me beseech you, to do this. I conclude in the language of the psalmist: "Kiss the Son" — that is, "submit to him" — "lest he be angry, and ye perish by the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

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## SERMON XVII.

EASE FOR THE TROUBLED SPIRIT.

BY THE REV. CHARLES BRADLEY, M. A.

"In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul."—PSALMS xciv. 19.

A TEXT of this kind shows us forcibly the power of Divine grace in the human heart: how much it can do to sustain and cheer the heart. The world may afflict a believer, and pain him; but if the grace which God has given him is in active exercise in his soul, the world cannot make him unhappy. It rather adds by its ill treatment to his happiness; for it brings God and his soul nearer together — God the fountain of all happiness, the rest and satisfaction of his soul.

This psalm was evidently written by a deeply afflicted man. The wicked, he says, were triumphing over him; and had been so for a long while. He could find no one on earth to take his part against them. "Who will rise up for me against the evil-doers?" he asks in the sixteenth verse; "or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?" And it seemed, too, as though God had abandoned him. His enemies thought so, and he seems to have been almost ready to think so himself. But what was the fact? All this time the Lord was secretly pouring consolation into his soul, and in the end made

that consolation abundant. In appearance a wretched, he was in reality a happy man ; suffering, yet comforted ; yea, the text says, delighted — “Thy comforts delight my soul.”

We must consider, first, his sorrow ; and then, his comfort under it. The evil ; and the remedy.

I. In his sorrow, there are two things for us to notice : the source, and the greatness of it.

1. The source of it, you may say, is doubtless the ill treatment he was experiencing. But not so, brethren ; it arose, he says, from his own mind — his own thoughts. Our Prayer-Book version of the passage makes this clear ; the word translated here “thoughts,” is rendered there “sorrows.” The one translation explains the other ; the psalmist means thoughts that engender sorrows ; disturbed, sorrowful and distressing thoughts.

But who can keep these out of his mind when trouble comes, or indeed when it does not come ? None of us, brethren. The best of us are liable at all times to these sources of disquietude. Some of us suffer more from them than from all our outward afflictions put together.

To enumerate them all would be an endless task ; but some we may mention.

There are thoughts concerning our own spiritual state and condition, which are often painful to us. “Is Christ my Savior ? or is he not ? Is this heart of mine a really converted heart ? or still a hard, ungodly, unclean one ? Am I one of the sheep of Christ — one that the good shepherd in his love and power has brought to himself, and will eventually take to his home in the heavens ? or am I one of the filthy swine, that he can now take no delight in, and that in his holiness he will one day cast for ever from him ?”

And there are thoughts of the same character as to our future spiritual course and condition. If we really are the Lord’s, how we shall keep so : how we shall ever get through the difficulties and temptations we see before us, and bear up under the conflict that is going on within us, and keep alive the faith and hope and love, that so frequently even now seem expiring.

And then come thoughts of the same troublous concern about death and judgment. How it will be with us when we come to die ; how we shall bear the sinking of dissolving nature ; the going into a new, strange, untried world ; the first sight there of a holy God ; the standing before him, as sinners, to be judged.

And this world, too, how many harassing, distressing thoughts does

that give rise to within us! We profess to have overcome, and triumphed over it; but the battle, dear brethren, we at times find has not been half fought nor won. "My Savior has told me, to 'take no thought of the morrow;' he has promised to think of it for me, and provide against it for me; nay, he has told me that he has already so provided for it; and oh! that I could leave it entirely in his hands! But it is not always I can. What shall I do when this or that thing comes, which I see impending? I would 'provide things honest in the sight of all men;' but how, amid the difficulties I am placed in, shall I ever do it? But children must be provided for; how shall I provide for them? They will want a friend to watch over them when I am gone; who will befriend them? They may go before me; if so, how shall I bear the loss!" "And these afflictions," the soul says at other times, "that are even now come upon me — why are they come? why are they so multiplied one upon another, and so long continued? I want to be enlightened; I cannot understand the Lord's dealings with me; the more I think, the more I am perplexed and disturbed."

And sometimes we can excite anxious thoughts in our minds, even from the absence of afflicting providences. "I read in my Bible," the soul says, "that 'whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth;' but he chastens not me. The sun rises brightly day after day upon me; my days pass in peace and quietness; oh! if I were a child of God could this be so?"

And then, brethren, when in our better moments we forget ourselves, and look at the world and church around us, here again our thoughts often trouble us. We mourn over the world's sins, and distractions, and miseries; we are ready to tremble often for the ark, the cause, the church, the glory of God. The Lord says to us — "Be still, and know that I am God; *I will* be exalted among the heathen, *I will* be exalted in the earth;" but we are afraid he will not be exalted — we find it hard to be still. We are as anxious for the church and for the cause of Christ, as though Christ were not that great and lofty being we know he is — the omnipotent King of Zion — but some petty prince, who cannot maintain his own cause, from whose hands the sceptre is ready to fall because of weakness.

I need not go on. You all know, that thinking is sometimes painful and distressing work. All of us, some in one way and some in another, have found out with the psalmist, that "thoughts" are frequently only another name for "sorrows."

2. Observe, now, the greatness of this man's distress.

This is forcibly expressed in the text, though in our translation it is scarcely obvious. The word in it rendered "thoughts," scholars tell



us, signifies originally the small branches of trees. The idea in the psalmist's mind appears to be this. "Look at a tree, with its branches shooting in every direction, entangling and entwining themselves one with another; let the wind take them — see how they feel it, how restless they become, and confused, beating against and striving one with another. Now my mind is like that tree. I have a great many thoughts in it, and thoughts which are continually shifting and changing; they are perplexed and agitated thoughts, battling one with another. There is no keeping the mind quiet under them; they bring disorder into it, as well as sorrow." And mark the word "multitude" in the text; there is exactly the same idea in that. It signifies more than number: confusion. Think of a crowd collected and hurrying about: "so," says the psalmist, "are my thoughts. I have a crowd of them in my mind, and a restless confused crowd. One painful thought is bad enough, but I have many: a multitude of them; an almost countless, a disturbed throng."

We now, then, understand the case we have before us. This man's sorrow arose, at this time, from disquieting thoughts within his own breast; and his sorrow was great, because these thoughts were many, and at the same time tumultuous.

"But what," some light-hearted persons may be ready to say, "is such sorrow to us? We know nothing of it; why should we be told of it?" Dear brethren, here is one reason why you should be told of it, that you may see and learn, that God need not go far, at any time, to afflict any one of us. He can do it, this text says, without calling to his aid sickness, or losses, or disappointments, or any outward calamities; there is a scourge ready prepared for him within our own breasts. He has only to turn our minds, our own thoughts, loose on us, and we shall be miserable enough.

We know not, brethren, what there is in our hearts — how much evil and how many seeds of misery and bitterness. God in his mercy restrains for a time the workings of our own minds; but now and then he lets a bitter branch shoot up, that we may see there is bitterness within us. But the harvest of evil and the harvest of misery — he reserves that to a distant day. The Lord grant that none of you may reap it. But reap it you will, brethren, if you make no effort now to escape it. It is a part of that "wrath to come," which we must have fall on us, if we do not now flee from it. Continue to make light of God's "great salvation," and you will understand at last too well, that there is no wretchedness like that which is born within a man's own bosom; which springs out of a man's own mind — a thinking, active, disquieted, guilty, God-abandoned mind — a heart given up to itself,

its own evils, its own wild thoughts and workings. Oh! dread that, brethren; dread it more than poverty, or bereavements, or any of the mortal ills "that flesh is heir to." Oh! dread it as you would dread hell. Let us all pray — "Lord! cleanse thou the thoughts of our hearts within us. Whatever thou take from us, take not thy Spirit, thy restraining Spirit, from us. Never in thine anger leave us to ourselves."

II. Let us now go on to our second point: the psalmist's comfort in his sorrow.

1. Look, first, at the source of this. It came from God. "*My* thoughts," he says; *they* constituted his sorrow; it sprung from himself. But "*Thy* comforts," he says; his consolations were from God. Here again, brethren, let me remind you, we may afflict and torment *ourselves*, but it is the living God only who can comfort us. It is easy for us to set our minds at work, and raise a storm: but if we want to be quieted, if we want a calm there — a real calm, not a lethargy — it is beyond our power to make one. The Lord, the Lord from his high throne above us, must speak, and bid the tumult be still.

But when the psalmist says "*Thy* comforts," he means more than comforts of which God is the author or giver. God is the author and giver of all our comforts — of all the earthly comforts that surround us; they are all the work and gift of his gracious hand. Hence he is called "the Father of mercies" — of mercies generally; as our church calls him in her General Thanksgiving — "the Father of *all* mercies." He is the God, the Scriptures tell us, "of all consolation." We are to understand *here* such comforts as are peculiarly and altogether God's; such as flow at once from God; not from him through creatures to us, but from him immediately to us without the intervention of creatures. The comforts that we get from his attributes — from meditating on, and what we call realizing them: the comforts we get from his promises — believing and hoping in him; and the comforts of his presence, he drawing near to our souls and shining into them — we knowing he is near us, conscious of it by the light and happiness and renewed strength within us. "*Thy* comforts" — the comforts we get from the Lord Jesus Christ; from looking at him; considering him; thinking of his person, and offices, and blood, and righteousness, and intercession, and exaltation, and glory, and his second coming; our meeting him, seeing him, being like him. "*Thy* comforts" — the comforts which come from the Holy Spirit, "the comforter;" when he opens the Scriptures to us, or speaks to us through ceremonies or ordinances, or witnesses within us of our adoption of God; shining in on his own work of grace

in our hearts ; enabling us to see that work, and to see in God's peculiar, eternal love to us ; not opening to us the book of life, and showing us our names there, but doing something that makes us almost as joyful as though that book were opened to us ; showing us the hand of God in our own souls — his converting, saving hand — his hand apprehending us as his own ; making us feel, as it were, his grasp of love, and feel, too, that it is a grasp which he shall never loosen.

2. Mark, next, the character of these comforts.

They correspond with the psalmist's affliction or sorrow. Were the sorrows "within him ;" not superficial, but low down (as his words seem to imply) in his heart ? These comforts also were "within him ;" he does not say "they delight me," but "they delight *my soul*" — enter deeply within me, get to the diseased, wounded part, and carry comfort there. And were his sorrows great ? was he suffering from "a multitude of thoughts ?" His comforts also were great and numerous ; as he says in another place, "I will go into thy house in *the multitude* of thy mercies" — surrounded with mercies — carrying within me comforts so many that I cannot count them. You remember how he prays in the fifty-first psalm ; when he supplicates the pardon of his sins, he beseeches God to have mercy on him "according to the multitude of his tender mercies." He knew his sins to be great ; he wanted a pardon as great. And so here, brethren, with his sorrows ; they were many, but not more in number than the comforts God gave him. He could find something in God to set against every distressing thought within him.

In some versions of this passage this idea is more clearly expressed. They read it thus : "according to the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight me." "My troublous thoughts I find to be the measure of thy consolations. Thou lookest at my sorrows, to see how many and how great they are ; and then thou takest of thy comforts, and pourest them into my soul, till thy comforts equal my sorrows and surpass them." Changing disquietude, not simply into peace. observe, but into pleasure : "delight." He does not say, "Thy comforts strengthen," or "sustain," but "Thy comforts *delight* my soul." Here is another blessed truth taught us, brethren. We can soon empty earthly things of all the good they contain. We sometimes feel, in trouble, as though we had got from earthly friends all the comfort they could give us. But God is a fountain of good ; there is no emptying of him. In him there is a well of consolation ; or rather, many wells of it : there is no drawing of them dry. As our sufferings abound, so he can make our consolations also abound ; and superabound, rising above our sufferings, so that we are ready at times to forget



them. Does he send heavy and deep afflictions? — then is the hour in which the soul often discovers for the first time how rich the Lord is in consolation, how mighty to comfort, as he had found him before “mighty to save.” Then, dear brethren, is the time to look upwards and say — “Now, Lord, comfort me; now let the long looked-for abundance of thy consolations come. Thou hast long sustained, long upheld me; where should I have been, hadst thou not? But now, Lord, now in this hour of trouble, ‘*delight* my soul.’ There is joy in thee — joy in thee for sinners such as I am; now, O Lord, let my soul receive of it. It has long thirsted, long waited for it; oh! let it come.” And this joy, brethren, these comforts, let me add, are frequently imparted to the believer at such seasons as these; when he least expects them. The text seems to intimate this also. The psalmist says, that it was in the very thick of his disquieting thoughts, “in the multitude of them,” when his heart was full of them, when they were at the very worst, and he was suffering most from them — it was then that the Lord’s comforts came and delighted him. And look at the eighteenth verse: there is the same idea. “When I said, My foot slippeth,” when I thought myself in the very act of falling, “thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.” The Lord’s mercies and the Lord’s comforts are often the nearest to us when we think them the farthest away. In this sense, as well as in many others, our extremity becomes his opportunity. So some of you, brethren, I doubt not, have found. There have been times when you have thought, and thought again, on this point and that, and all to no purpose; you have taken counsel, and much counsel with your soul, but the only fruit of it has been, you have had sorrow in your heart daily; your hope has failed you, your spiritual strength has failed you, darkness has seemed to be spreading itself all around and within you. Have you never found, brethren, that this has been the time God has chosen for sending relief — for pouring into your souls from himself such beams of light and consolation as have made your whole souls wonder and rejoice together? There was no delight, no sensible comfort within you, while the crowd was collecting — while only a few disquieting thoughts or things troubled you; but when the crowd *was* collected — when trouble without, or trouble within, or perhaps both together came on you in their full measure and force, then God’s comforts came and “delighted your souls.” In the “evening time,” when you thought that darkness was about to set in, the thick darkness of a long night, in the “evening time,” he made it “light.”

So it has been with us, brethren, and so probably it will be with us many times again. We must learn to strengthen our faith from our



past happy experience ; learn to look for “ the goodness of the Lord ” in the days that are to come, just as we have experienced it in the days that are past. While we make this our prayer — “ Thou hast been my help ; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation ; ” let us make this our resolution — “ Thou hast been my help, O Lord : — therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.”

Is there a man here who is suffering from “ thoughts within him,” about which I have scarcely said one word ? a man whom God by his Spirit has made to think of his ways, and who at this moment is disquieted with thoughts concerning the sinfulness of those ways, and the end to which they may lead him ? Is there any man here whose chief sorrows are sorrows about a guilty soul, and what he thinks a near opening hell ? Oh ! if there is such a man here, (and would that these walls contained hundreds of such ! ) I would say to him from this text — not one atom of comfort, real safe comfort, can you ever get, till you look out of yourself, and entirely out of yourself for it. You want pardon, you want help, you want hope, you want salvation ; dear brethren, you may think about these things till you drop into the grave, but you will never get one of them till you have found out that mere thinking will never do — will never turn a guilty soul into a pardoned one, will never take off from a man’s guilty head the burden of his great multitude of sins, will never close an open hell, nor open a shut-up heaven. These things are all made over — the blessings you want are all made over to the Lord Jesus Christ ; they are dwelling in him for you : and there is no way of getting them but by looking to him for them, making him your pardon, him your help, him your hope, him your salvation. It is a mercy that you have been led to think ; it is thinking, that through God’s mercy has brought you acquainted with your real condition. It has discovered to you the evil ; it has done its work. But it can do no more than that, brethren. It is looking upwards — it is believing — that must bring you the remedy ; a going out of yourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ ; a turning of thoughtfulness into prayerfulness ; a turning of painful musings within you, into earnest supplications to that Savior who is above you. It is making him, to your souls, the spring of all you want, and all you desire.

# SERMON XVIII.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT.

BY REV. W. M. BUNTING,  
OF HALIFAX.

“The precious blood of Christ.”—1 PETER i. 19.

THE atonement is exhibited in Scripture, not only as the procuring cause of sanctification, but as the most powerful of motives to personal holiness. The notion that it operates and avails wholly, or chiefly, in the way of persuasion, to the exclusion of its propitiatory value, is one which is unsound and Socinian; its primary effect is in the mind of God, engaging him to forgive sin, and by his Holy Spirit to restore the forgiven sinner; but yet, by turning him to a consideration and regard of the righteousness which does so, it undoubtedly exerts a secondary influence upon the mind of the sinner, animating his faith, attracting his love, and stimulating him to duty and obedience. Therefore to trust in Christ as an all-sufficient sacrifice is not only the authoritative condition of God's maintaining his fixed design in the salvation of the sinner; but that adherence to Christ, and affection for him, which such a faith necessarily includes in it, has a natural tendency to assist in maintaining, by its continued agency, habits and dispositions to holiness in the mind of the Christian believer; who, by contemplating the atonement thus set before him, is led, in some degree, to appreciate the value of its offers; and to draw such inferences with regard to the immensity of the blessings it secures, as well as to the demerits of that moral evil which it expiates, as greatly to heighten his desires after the former, and deepen his abhorrence of the latter.

And this is the view which the apostle takes of the words in connection with the text, “Be ye holy, for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father,”—if your hopes are spiritual, consistent, acceptable,—“who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:” such is the practical exhortation of the apostle. And this is the grand motive which he exhibits: “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ.” And I hope, in dependence upon your prayers, that it may tend in some measure to promote your growth in holiness, and

other valuable objects in the Christian life, if we expatiate for a few moments upon the ineffable and inestimable preciousness of that blood, as it presents itself under several separate, essential, and enhancing considerations.

Suffer me, however, to remind you that our approach to this subject should be reverential, tranquil, and deliberate; it is a subject for much thought and much fear. Let us pray that the Holy Spirit may fill our minds with this truth; that he will prepare our hearts to receive the moral and practical directions it suggests, and that he may enable us to form a proper estimate of the preciousness and value of the atoning blood, as the foundation of all our present holiness and happiness, and of all our future hopes.

I. LET US ENDEAVOR TO ESTIMATE IT IN ITS ADAPTATION TO ALL THE WANTS OF MAN, AND ITS ANSWERABLENESS TO ALL THE PROPERTIES OF GOD.

We must admit it to be important, to be necessary, and to have precisely the relation which it should bear to our interests and hopes. The alternative to the atonement would not have been God's dishonor, but it would have been man's ruin. The redemption of the soul is precious; and therefore the redemption of Christ must be so. Man of himself has wronged, and would wrong God by his rebellion; he is a rebel against him; and if ever that rebel was to be forgiven, if ever Jehovah, — if I may so say, and I think I speak upon the authority and with the warrant of the Scripture, — if ever Jehovah was to be justified in forgiving him, it could but be by means of an atonement, adequate, appropriate, and acceptable.

Let us propose to ourselves the *necessity* of this sacrifice; and of course the foundation of the value of the sacrificial blood must be more particularly considered and ascertained. We will endeavor, then, in the manner of the great apostle of the Gentiles, to reason out of the Scriptures upon this point, not independently of their principles and tenor, but to reason out of them, by openly alleging, demonstrating, and explaining that Christ must needs suffer.

He who made man has an indisputable right to govern him. Of course he does so in conformity with his own nature, which is infinitely holy, just, and good. He has an essential, unalterable right in him, to uphold his government over him, and to compel his creatures to submit to him. Of course the principles of his government will be embodied in a well-understood law, which will be in its turn the basis of his practical administration. We learn from Scripture that this law was, in its origin, essentially a spiritual law; and as the natural effect of a

cause, what his law was, that his government would be also. To this law was attached the condition of eternal life; that is to say, by the most scrupulous obedience to it man was to be confirmed for ever in the life which he then had, with the addition of all that was capable of increasing and enhancing his enjoyments in it; while the penalty of breaking it was the forfeiture of all his hopes of immortality and never-ending joy, which must of necessity take in the idea of personal suffering, in order to vindicate the perfect proportion existing between the promised recompense of obedience, and the threatened penalty of transgression; for the loss of immortality alone would be no proportionate or correspondent penalty to his disobedience.

Mark the three immutable and indisputable principles in this law! It was the express condition of the divine engagement. It was the basis and support of the divine government. It was intended as a manifestation and expression of the divine perfection.

Plainly, then, by the veracity of God, to take the lowest view of the subject, by his credit as the Creator and Governor of the world, swaying the affections of an intelligent and upright creature; and by the glory of his unchanging nature, he was concerned in the enforcement of that law, by all these he was pledged to the conferment of eternal life,—for it is important to consider that man was then rather in an elementary than in a confirmed state of things,—by all these considerations or principles he was pledged to the conferment of eternal life on such as continued obedient to the end of their trial: and to the adjudication of its opposite, *eternal death*, with whatever it implies, whether of personal and bodily suffering, or of the simple loss of immortality and joy, to those who transgressed it. Equally unrighteousness is impossible with God, either to punish the innocent, or to pretermitt the punishment of the offender. No! the sad fact is, that with every thing in favor of his obedience, his capacities, his circumstances, his motives, the powerful bias of his divine destination, his noble and attractive hopes, with every thing, in fact, in favor of his obedience, *man transgressed*.

Is God then unrighteous that taketh vengeance? God forbid. There is every thing in God, there is every thing in what belongs to, and is associated with the idea of him, that forbids, precludes, repels, such a thought. The truth of his word, the rectitude of his administration, the holiness of his nature — which implies universal righteousness, — all this not only justified, to speak in the manner of man himself, to whom the assumption has reference, but rendered it absolutely needful that he should withhold the remission of the life that was forfeited; or, what comes to the same thing, of the death which was due.



But now it was for his own wisdom and sovereignty to determine in what manner the full amount of satisfaction, owing to justice, should be rendered. And here it was that his own mercy interposed with the wonderful work of the propitiation, so contrived that sin should not go unpunished, but that the sinner should be spared: that a substitute should, if possible, be found capable of glancing at his own design, and, by his peculiar merit, paying the penalty incurred by the offender. The whole race of man is comprehended and contemplated in the person of Adam. And only granting, for this must be conceded, that the eternal death of innumerable finite persons may be commuted into the temporal death of one infinite person — “Enough,” cries Justice, “if condemned millions are to be restored to their forfeited capacity and probation” — for this is all that is included in the idea of an atonement (there is nothing in it beyond this,) “if condemned millions are to be restored to their state of probation for eternal life, and to have their hopes and opportunities given them back again, with grace to influence them to a right choice for the future — give me the blood, the life, the death!” for these terms are all compatible; “which render the sacrificial offering of one worthy and adequate substitute a satisfaction for the sins of the whole race.” And such a satisfaction was the righteousness of Christ: “For it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.”

He, who was the Author and end of their being, the Maker and Judge of mankind; “for whose pleasure they were and are created;” and who might have justified himself in their condemnation after their fall, he justly requires that in that new and living way, under which, in his own mercy, he proposes to redeem their lives from destruction, his honor should be equally consulted and procured by the vicarious death of the Redeemer. And here we think the argument of the great Dr. Owen on this point is referable. “If it were just of God to demand such a satisfaction, if it were just of him to punish, of course the punishment was incapable of being dispensed with.” And we have the incidental testimony of the Scripture, not only as to the fact, but also as to the necessity of the atonement, laid before us in such a manner as may render the great propitiatory sacrifice more strikingly valuable than the most ample and copious direct testimony upon the subject; and mark how! Did our blessed Savior pray to his Father in the garden, that the cup might *not* pass from him? No, his prayer was, “O my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me.” And was that cup still imposed upon him? Yea, the cup was drunk to its very dregs. The inference is, that it was impossible for

the cup to pass from him, and yet the cup of the wrath of God was to pass into the hands of him who desired to drink it. And the apostle declares and asserts, that "God set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;" proving that the sacred Majesty of heaven was willing to justify the believer in Jesus; without whose atoning sacrifice (the inference is irresistible,) there would have been no declaration of his righteousness; his righteousness would have been obscured, dishonored and withdrawn from the view of men, and there would have been no moral impression made upon the intelligent universe.

Can God pardon sin upon any other terms? Observe two remarkable passages in the epistle to the Hebrews, which we think establish this fact: for we are rather eager for the truth than for our own assumption, and desire not to overstate our argument. In the ninth chapter the apostle says, "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year, with the blood of others: for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world." Now, how does this appear? The apostle draws no inference, he uses no argument, he makes no appeal to the judgment, there is nothing in the passage which shows it to be a conclusion from former premises; but he lays down at once the hypothesis of the necessity of the atonement; he assumes that there must be an offering for sin world without end, unless the Savior's atonement be perfect and complete; that unless by "this one oblation he for ever perfected them that are sanctified," it must be a matter of course, that in order to bear away the sins of the world from past and future generations, he must have suffered often from the foundation of the world to the end of it. It is impossible to understand, appreciate, and admit the argument of the apostle in this passage, except by the assumption we are now maintaining.

And then, in the next chapter, he says, "For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth" — and what is the truth here referred to, but the scriptural truth of the atoning sacrifice, of the atoning sacrifice of Christ — "If we sin wilfully," with regard to this known truth, in the deliberate and ultimate rejection of it; if we ultimately, wilfully, and deliberately reject it; not merely willingly, for no man sins unwillingly; but if we wilfully and deliberately sin, in the rejection of that truth — in the great truth of the atonement, the all-sufficient atonement — "after that we have received the knowledge of

the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" for those who thus wilfully reject it. But there is no argument, for we observe he immediately passes over to the consequences, the thing is assumed as true, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins;" but, as a matter of course, there is "a certain fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation." Here the apostle obviously assumes the sin of rejecting the atonement of Christ; he first of all states, "that there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins," no other atonement; then he does not proceed to demonstrate, but assumes, that if a man sins in the rejection of that sacrifice, the consequence is, an absence of that interposition between him and God which such a sacrifice involves in it, and the certain damnation of him who so situates himself: "if there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, there remaineth nothing but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation."

Well then, brethren, God might have justified himself in our condemnation; but he was willing, according to the emphasis of the gospel, to glorify himself in our redemption; and this he could only do by the vicarious death of the Redeemer.

We cannot but be struck with the coincidence between *pardon* and *justification*, as exhibited in the New Testament. Pardon we conceive to be quite peculiar to God. It is there said to be justification; the meaning of this may be either — that pardon through the sacrifice of Christ places the pardoned man in the condition of the just, or that God pardons him justly. That the pardoned man is so forgiven, so entirely divested from that time forward of blame, on the condition of his faithfulness, of his continued faithfulness in Christ — so entirely, that God puts no more to his account his past sins, but treats him with favor and complacency, and looks upon him as righteous, accounts him as righteous; this is one sense in which pardon is justification. In the other sense in which we conceive the expression may have a similar meaning, we suppose it to infer that God pardons him justly; that is, he pardons him in his own way, on his own terms, on the terms of the propitiation to the honor of his justice, "for he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

But, then, pardon is not justification, either such as to place the sinner in the condition of the just, or to reflect honor upon the glory, righteousness, and excellencies of the Deity, except upon the terms of the propitiation; for God declares his righteousness through the propitiation of the blood of Christ. Oh, precious then, incalculably precious is that blood, without the shedding of which there is no remission; and after the shedding of which there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; he who rejects which has no other hope, no other alternative, and can



look only for judgment and fiery indignation, and his doom, though dreadful, is deserved : which blood wanting you *would* have perished, and which, trifled with and wasted, you *will*, your punishment being dreadfully aggravated in the latter case by the sensibility of your neglect, aggravated into an unspeakable retribution. Well may we, then, viewing the necessity of the case, exclaim with the apostle, precious blood !

II. I EXHORT YOU TO ESTIMATE THE PRECIOUSNESS OF THE BLOOD BY ITS INTRINSIC MERIT.

Such a sacrifice as this was adequate, and adapted to the case.— There is a passage in the epistle to the Hebrews, with which you are most of you familiar, so well illustrating this point, that we may be excused for confining ourselves to the consideration of it : “ For if the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God ? ” Here you perceive the intrinsic merit of the sacrifice is ascribed to the blood of Christ.

There are two or three representations of this subject, which may tend to increase your ideas of its meritoriousness and value.

1. The first circumstance prominent in this description of our Savior’s sacrifice, is that it is a *direct oblation to God*. Christ offered himself to God as a sacrificial offering for sin. This fact is not only stated frequently, but always when reference is made to Christ as a sacrifice in the New Testament. It is recognized too in all our standards of theology, as indicative of a proper sacrifice ; it is repeated with great frequency in the liturgy of the Church of England — in all which it is shown to be a proper sacrifice and oblation to God, and not a gratuitous gift. It may have been spontaneous, it may have been voluntary ; but still, if the Savior would become a substitute, if he would become an offering for the guilt of the condemned, he must needs suffer.

2. And this oblation and offering himself to God, contained an *ample recognition of the authority of God’s law, and of his right to punish transgressors*. There is an emphasis, both in this epistle, and in that of the Romans, laid by the apostle on the word *obedience* in each case, implying Christ’s obedience to the law, not his active obedience in his life, but the reference is plainly to his sacrificial offering or oblation ; and this act of obedience to God’s law contains a recognition of his authority and right, and hence, in the language of the prophet Isaiah,



“God is well pleased with him,” because of his obedience ; and because in that act he magnified his law ; and made it incomparably honorable in the sight of the universe.

3. Another circumstance prominent in the description of the Savior’s sacrifice, is the *intelligence and voluntariness of the victim*. Christ offered himself to God through the eternal Spirit. This refers possibly, and may be commonly understood to apply to his sacerdotal functions, to the fact that the priest and the victim are one and the same person ; or it may be considered as a comparison instituted between the figurative sacrifice and the intelligent victim referred to : “For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth” — if the involuntary, compelled, reluctant victim sanctifieth, “how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself” — by virtue and support of the eternal Spirit that is, his intelligent nature — “to God purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God ?” You need not to be told that these figurative victims were involuntary, or that if they had apprehended the nature of the doom to which they were devoted, they would have recoiled from it. Every school-boy is acquainted with the fact, that among the Romans, whose system of superstition was a corruption of the Jewish sacrificial system, there existed a belief that it was a most ominous and inauspicious circumstance, if the unwillingness of the victim rendered it difficult to bind it to the altar : but there was nothing of this sort in the case of our Savior. No ! he was an intelligent, cheerful, deliberate victim ; what he did he did not by compulsion, but by choice ; he freely made this recognition of God’s authority, and this oblation to God’s justice ; he lay in the bosom of the Father, and, therefore, when he felt the beatings of his heart, his own responded to them. He *came* down from heaven ; he was not *hurled* from his throne, he was not dragged like the creature-victim ; “he came down from heaven for us men, and for our salvation,” and he would re-ascend up into heaven by no other way than that of the cross : and being there, we see in him, not the unwilling victim bound with cords to the horns of the altar, kicking against the fatal and sanguinary knife : but the yielding, uncomplaining, cheerful, self-devoted sacrifice, which is the grand fact on which its preciousness rests ; because he gave himself to God, the Savior’s sacrifice was one of a sweet smelling savor to him.

4. Another circumstance — one which we believe was prefigured by the sacrifices under the law, and one which substantiates the sacrifice of Christ to have been a proper sacrifice — is that *he was an unblemished victim*. In consequence of his miraculous conception by the

Holy Ghost, he escaped the common contagion of mankind ; and his personal character in after life was holy, for "he was harmless and undefiled, and separate from sinners," and thus he passed to the altar an unblemished victim. And because Jesus Christ was righteous, on this ground, which was indispensable, as without it he could not have offered himself to God, his sacrifice became an acceptable propitiation for the sins of the whole world.

5. But the most prominent and important circumstance in this passage has reference to the value of the victim through his *personal union with the Deity*: Christ, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself to God. I put it to you whether any proof can be drawn from Scripture, of any personal and distinct agency of the Holy Spirit, the third person in the adorable Godhead, in the atoning sacrifice of the Savior ; for that notion involves in it a mischievous error. We can only come to the conclusion of the presence and agency of the Holy Spirit in the person of Christ ; contrary to the assumption of Dr. Macknight, that the offering must be first made in heaven before it is complete ; that it could never be offered to God until Christ had passed into the heavenly place, and appeared before him. It is true that the Spirit had an agency in the offering ; but our assumption is, that it was by the *exercise*, and not by any distinct personal operation of the Holy Spirit, that he was quickened and raised from the dead ; and there is no discord between that assumption and the opinions of the most sound and wise of men : it harmonizes with the language of the Church of England in her thirty-first article, "Of the one oblation of Christ *finished upon the cross.*" "The offering of Christ once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual : and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone." And we are bold to assert, that there is no proof in all the Scripture of any person of the Godhead represented as personally distinct, or of any distinct official agency of the Spirit, in the atoning sacrifice of our Lord.

*The expression of this text, therefore, reveals the undoubted presence of the Divinity.* And there are many parallel passages to this effect ; as for instance, in the opening of the epistle to the Romans, the apostle, speaking of Jesus Christ, declares "that he was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared according to the Spirit of holiness" — according to the divine nature which resided within him — "to be the Son of God ;" and was declared to be such, "by his resurrection from the dead." And why ? Because he rose from the dead by his own power, by the exercise of that spirit which resided within him. And perhaps the apostle makes the same reference, in his

epistle to Timothy, when he declares that God the Deity, "was manifest in the flesh, but justified only in the Spirit." There was then a manifestation of the Deity in mortal nature; that Deity vindicating itself, and justifying itself as Deity and as God, on several occasions for practical important purposes, putting forth its divine energy and power. And so says the apostle here, "Jesus Christ, by the eternal Spirit," which has been already explained, by virtue, by full virtue, or rather by support, by the special, supernatural support, of his indwelling divine nature, offered himself to God. And I need not tell you that his was a sacrifice which justice required, that it was one which divine mercy only could have provided, and which a divine person alone could have rendered. The Lord of Glory was crucified! The Prince of life was killed! The Almighty's fellow was offered up.— "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd; and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts." God shed his blood for his church. Well, therefore, may we arrive at the conclusion of the apostle, that "this is the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, which shall purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God." "Worthy is the Lamb;" therefore, precious is his blood!

III. Compute the value of this precious blood WITH REFERENCE TO THE PERSONAL VALUE OF THE SAVIOR. Compute the value of the sacrifice with reference to *Christ's own deity*.

With this we can never thoroughly sympathize; but we may form some faint conception of it, we may be impressed with the highest sense of it at which we can arrive. How precious to himself was his blood! How dear his life! and, therefore, how expensive his death! And now, to furnish you with some simple thoughts on the subject.—Remember that he retained, that he could not but retain, even when in the flesh — his divine and spiritual nature. And, therefore, he could not but be sensible of the transcendent dignity of it. Indeed, what dignifies his sacrifice is, that he could measure the *stoop* he made, that he could behold the distance he travelled, and the humiliation to which he bowed. And hence, not seldom during his intercourse with his disciples, and with men upon earth — although it was not his general habit — when it became him he broke in upon his general habit, and vindicated his divinity for the very purpose of exalting and commending his love, for the purpose of expressly impressing the minds of those around him with the fact of his consciousness of the Godhead dwelling in him,— and his own consciousness, therefore, of the infinite generos-



ity of the stoop which he made for the miseries and sins of his creatures.

When he became man, he was endowed with all the innocent peculiarities, affections, and instincts of human nature, and the strongest instinct of human nature we know is self preservation, the love of life. And can it be supposed for a moment, that these feelings were less acute in our Lord Jesus Christ than in ordinary men? they must have been the reverse, because in his case they were never blunted by sin. Oh, what a heart had he! How harmless were his joys! How painful were his sympathies! There was a great deal more of feeling than of philosophy in the character of our Savior when he was upon the earth. Of course his intellect, even in his inferior nature, was unfathomable: but still it contained in it more developments of the tenderest sensibilities, than of the stern, cold intellectuality of sensibility, of that sensible sympathy which usually associates with the acutest sense of self-value and self-love, the most innocent of our sins. He felt for himself as well as for others; he valued himself, he loved his life. How pathetically did he appeal to his disciples in terms like these, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends!" "I am the good Shepherd" — hear the illustration — "the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

And consider that the Savior's was an *innocent offering*. And this must have rendered his life more valuable to himself, as well as his death — death, with all its moral associations, is repugnant; but the death of the atonement, as an instantaneous recognition of the authority of God over a world of sinners, and his predetermination to punish sin, to his purity and innocence must have been peculiarly revolting. He was not willing to admit for a moment that it was his design to forfeit, — he never forfeited the great gift of life, he never rendered himself personally deserving of death; he was tenacious of life, he was more afflicted at his anticipated removal than one bowed at the feet of God under a sense of forfeited life and deserved death. We speak of Christian fortitude and humility, and that humility constituted by a sense of our demerit. In such a sense our Savior had it not; in no sense had he deserved the displeasure of God for himself; and I say in consequence he must more sensitively have recoiled from the death of the atonement, and from death in all its forms, from all its bitter bodily pains, and more especially from the bitter moral associations connected with it, as a sacrifice for sins not his own.

And what do we infer from all this, but the costliness and generosity of the sacrifice; that he who knew himself to be God, "who," as the apostle significantly tells us, "thought it no robbery to be equal with



God" — that he who knew himself to be God, should assume mortal nature, and endowed with all its tenderest sympathies, and loving life, he should hasten to its close; and that, pure, placid, and peaceful as he was, conscious of his personal innocence, he should submit to receive, not only wounds and sufferings, but to be branded with dishonor, and to have the impress of divine and judicial wrath stamped upon him, that he might redeem the lost at such a vast expense to God, and to himself such an unspeakable sacrifice?

O Lamb of God! was ever pain,  
Was ever love like thine?

#### IV. CONSIDER THE VALUE ATTACHED TO THIS BLOOD BY THE FATHER.

1. We might illustrate this by many tokens and testimonies of his complacency towards his Son, before his sufferings and death. "When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let the angels of God worship him." At another time, "Lo, a voice from heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And this is a proof, that in his submission to work the business of redemption, he undertook a task which was dear to the heart of God. When he undertook the burthen of the redemption of God's favorite creation, it rendered him an object of peculiar complacency, in the prosecution of which he never lost his Father's regard: he abode in his Father's love, because he perfectly did his commands in reference to the prosecution of the great enterprise in which he had embarked.

2. Consider as another illustration of the preciousness of Christ's blood, either in life or death, to the Father — consider, I say, *the personal compensation he awarded to him for his sufferings*. The orthodox faith has been assailed on two points connected with this subject, by the Socinians. The taunt of, I cannot but say, our unhappy opponents, is directed first in this way: "That it represents God as a being who would not consent to remit the punishment of an offending race, without devolving the burthen of their sufferings upon his own Son." We know easily how to retort this taunt: it is one which argues that our system is unmerciful; that it is a system which dishonors the justice and mercy of God, who makes no other provision for a righteous and honorable remission of sins; that it exhibits the divine being in a very revolting light. But is our system so? What is the truth on this point? Why, that when the justice, the honor, and the perfections of God rendered an atonement necessary for our salvation; — which rendered the redemption necessary of the whole world, as sinners against the infinite Majesty of heaven; when a redemption price

became necessary, God himself paid it down in the person of his own Son, and thus expressed his love to his fallen creatures, as an expression of his regard for him, he comes from heaven, and dies for their guilt, and to expiate their offences : he expresses his willingness that men should repent and live, and his unwillingness that they should die their deserved death. And this is an expression of his love, unmeasurably greater than if he could have pardoned sins without such a sacrifice.

But the taunt then is transferred to the substitute : “ Oh, then, still the Deity must take a malignant pleasure in suffering, when he alleges the atonement of his Son to be the only alternative to the misery of his creatures.” Our gospel meets this objection too ; it tells us, that though God in mercy spared not his only Son, but freely delivered him up to death for man, he, in justice to that Son, afforded him supernatural assistance, to sustain him in his trial and humiliation ; he made haste to raise him from the dead when the atonement was complete, when his death was accomplished, and his blood was shed ; he would not suffer his holy One to see corruption ; he made good speed to recover him from all but necessary, absolutely necessary dishonor ; he would not suffer him “ to see corruption.” And now he sits at his right hand, in the heavenly places, he is crowned with compensatory glory and honor as the Redeemer of the world, and as the Savior of his people ; and such glory as this would never have accrued to him, as the maker and governor of the universe. He has assumed a new name, the name of Jesus. He has assumed a new relation, that of the Savior. He has assumed a new dominion, a mediatorial one. Every thing now is mediatorial. His government is mediatorial. His providence is mediatorial. His official character is mediatorial. All these new names have a distinct relation to his sufferings. They are procured, and accorded to him on the ground of his having thus nobly accomplished and submitted to the death of the cross for us. And now his crown sparkles with the tears of penitents, and their lustre far surpasses, in his own esteem, the glory of its other embellishments : his palace resounds with the sighs of broken hearts, and the songs of the rejoicing ones are like music to his ears. Now his train is composed of the redeemed — the liberated captives — the followers of his cross ; he rejoices with peculiar satisfaction and complacency ; the name of Jesus is music to his ear, he loves to hear it echoed ! echoed ! echoed ! It cannot be too often made the subject of appeal to God his Father. It cannot be too often repeated to himself. He loves to hear the sinner address him as Jesus, as his official Lord, upon whom he devolves his hopes, as the responsible instrument of his salvation.

And when he looks upon earth, he beholds the fruits of his redemption, in the conversion of sinners, in the comforting of mourners, in the recovery of the world, in the propagation of the gospel, and in the edification of his church. And when he transfers his attention from earth to heaven, there he beholds the multitudes around his throne, whose robes have been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb; who through his merit, and the efficacy of his blood, are placed there, far beyond the reach of any earthly toil or danger; who, we are beautifully told, "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." And this we are told in language which has no reference to their past character; when they are described in the past tense, it speaks of them as those "who have not been defiled;" and as those who "were redeemed from among men," but when they are spoken of in the present tense, if we may so speak about heaven, it says, "these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth;" their eyes are upon his throne, he is the object and centre of attraction: —

Jesus, harmonious name!  
 It charms the hosts above;  
 They evermore proclaim  
 And wonder at his love.  
 'Tis all their happiness to gaze;  
 'Tis heaven to see our Jesus' face.

When he thus sees the work of redemption on earth, when he beholds the redeemed who follow him with ceaseless songs in heaven, he looks forward to the futurity, when all men shall bless, and be blessed of him; "he sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied." Then his Father puts his seal to the work; he intimates the unspeakable preciousness of his blood, and his fixed determination that his death shall be a full recompense, a full redress; and he illustrates the same thing by the propitiatory effect his blood has upon his own mind. The Scripture sometimes speaks of the Father not merely as the first person of the Deity, or as having a personal relation to the Son, and Holy Spirit, but as the fountain and representative of the Godhead. Our Lord speaks frequently as though the Deity subsisted in his person; he speaks of the Deity as subsisting in the person of the Father; and the Scriptures teach us the effect, the instantaneous effect, of the presentation of the blood of the great atonement upon the mind of the Father as upon the mind of the Deity; so that his justice is suspended and quieted, and turned aside, when he hears the Son. The blood of Christ once freely shed, now constantly sprinkles the mercy-seat; the Father hears him with rejoicing,

The Father hears him pray,  
 His dear Anointed One;  
 He cannot turn away  
 The presence of his Son.

And the Spirit makes a proper application of the truth : —

His Spirit answers to the blood,  
And tells me I am born of God ;

so precious is the blood of Christ in the esteem of the Father.

V. And need I remind you of the IMMENSE GOOD THIS BLOOD IS THE MEANS OF PROCURING TO MANKIND, to say nothing of the lower orders of creation, as a further illustration of this subject. When the burst of joy shall rise from many angels round the throne, and the elders saying, with a loud voice, “ Worthy the Lamb that was slain ; ” then every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, whether at present higher or lower in the scale of creation, every creature shall in some mysterious way subscribe Amen ! to the beneficial effects of their redemption by their common Savior. But if we look to the effect of this blood upon the mind and condition of man generally, what do we owe to it ? We owe to it our immortal destination ; for, beyond question, had the law taken effect upon the breach of it, if its penalty had been inflicted, our race would have been extinguished. If in the day Adam ate the forbidden fruit he had died, his posterity would have been extinct ; we are, therefore, indebted to our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the language of the New Testament, for our earthly existence ; and by the same testimony we are clearly indebted to him for our resurrection-body ; we should, therefore, have no essential or perfect constitution without him, either in a present or a future state. We are clearly indebted to him for bringing life and immortality to light by the gospel, and putting us in possession of it by his blood. We are indebted to his blood for our salvation, and all which that involves us in, as responsible beings. We are indebted to his blood for our hopes of eternal life ; for all our capacities of mind ; for the favorable and auspicious circumstances in which we are placed ; for all the conveniences of nature ; for the arrangements of providence ; for the lengthening out our lease of life, and for the arrest of judgment, which is made in our favor — all this is to be put to the account of Christ.

We are indebted to him for all the chastenings of providence, which are parts of God’s merciful system. There is nothing in the world which ought not to remind us of it ; man’s whole providential history should remind us of our obligation to him : the mercy of God to him in his affliction. We are apt to forget what we deserve when God prospers us ; and when in his providence he chastens us, to pray to him for a right use of it, and to be reminded of the moral cause of all.—



Why are these things so? Wherefore does God condemn me? Because I am a sinner. This thought does not often glance into our mind in prosperity.

O unexhausted grace!  
 O love unspeakable!  
 I am not gone to my own place,  
 I am not yet in hell!

We do not remember that to deserve mercies we must thank God for crosses, so chastening us by his providence, that we are driven for refuge to the mediatorial interposition of the Savior, and the influence of his precious blood. To this blood we owe his grace, spiritualizing us, and disposing us to welcome all he does. We owe it to this that the pulpit stands a fountain of pure and inspired instruction. To this we are indebted for the gospel, for the ministry, for all our Christian companionship and intercourse, for access to God in prayer, and the leading and guidance of the Holy Spirit — all this we owe to his precious blood.

And mark its effects upon the penitent and enlightened man: it procures his pardon, for he is justified by his blood; he has peace in the blood of Christ, it purges his conscience from dead works to serve the living God; he rejoices in the power of going to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that he may be joined to his spiritual church; and that he, who was once far off, is made nigh by the blood of Christ, that he may have access and boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

It is our duty, our daily duty, to look into that passage, I mean the first chapter of the first epistle of John. Judge ye if the reference is not to-day needful, and if it is not needful for your ultimate consideration; we have elsewhere described it, as the daily experience of every faithful believer. And the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin; it keeps us from condemnation, it purifies our hearts, it draws us towards God, and cleanseth us from all sin. And there is a contemporaneous expression which should be equally habitually our study; the expression, "if we walk in the light we have fellowship with God;" we are privileged with entire sanctification; every day it enables us to walk in fellowship with God, through this precious blood which cleanseth from sin. O perfect influence of the blood of the everlasting covenant, by which God maketh us perfect in every good word and work! O victorious blood! by which we are made finally conquerors, and more than conquerors! "They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony."

Take a comparative view, if you please, of this influence, and you will find it transcends every thing. Compare it with the earthly objects

of men's affections, with wealth, with friendship, with power, with court influence, with the splendors of state, with intellect, with scientific eminence, with personal accomplishments, and what are all these to the blood of Christ?

Vain, delusive world, adieu!  
 With all thy creature good;  
 Only Jesus I pursue,  
 Who bought me with his blood.

All thy pleasures I forego!  
 I trample on thy wealth and pride!  
 Only Jesus will I know,  
 And Jesus crucified.

Compare it with religious experience. Some have substituted alms, mortifications, penances, penitence and prayers; and even works of faith, as an instrument, are too often substituted by the weak and unenlightened mind, for the meritorious cause of pardon; but with this blood all these are unnecessary, and without it they are unavailable; with it they are superfluous, without it they are absolutely worthless, and of no account in the sight of God.

Compare this sacrifice with all those by which it was typified under the law. There is a remarkable reference in the context to this subject: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." The reference is possibly to the price at which the sacrificial victims were purchased, and the costliness of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ. "Ye know," says the apostle with reference to the propitiatory sacrifice, "that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold" — your lamb is not bought, and his virtue, his merit, is incorruptible; it always flows — it flows to the uttermost end of time; it flows for ever; it will sustain the favor of God through the ages of eternity. It is incorruptible, it does not need to be renewed; "for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

Compare — in order that the close of the climax may rise to its highest point — compare it with every other part of the Savior's work, with his personal and official character, with his divinity, with his incarnation, with his teaching, his miracles, his power, his mercy, his acts of obedience, his sufferings, his life, his death; and after death, with his resurrection, his commission to his apostles, with the regal prerogative and power which enters into every thing which belongs to him as a mediator. "All," as Bishop Hall says, "have a reference to the atonement, all parts of the Savior's character work by virtue of the

atonement," have a relation to it, and have their end in it. So that, after comparing it to every thing in the universe, such is its richness and merit, that we must sum all up in the conclusion, that it is the super-eminently precious blood of Christ.

VI. By way of application, let us see whether this blood be not precious to every rightly affected human heart. Mark its efficacy and power over every class of sinners, who are resting upon its sovereign influence through the power of the Holy Spirit. "To you he is precious."

1. Look at the half-awakened sinner, he that is convicted of sin by the power of God ; he anticipates judgment, he anticipates hell beyond it ; the lightnings of God's wrath flash in the face of his conscience ; he hears the thunders of the broken law, he is disturbed, alarmed, unhappy ; but let him stop here, and then he will soon find that all is hardness and despair ; he wants the thunder-shower, the softening influence — you have it here. He is brought in contact with the cross, he is pointed to Christ crucified, he is led to reflect on what Christ has done and suffered for him, and these sufferings carried home to his heart by the Holy Spirit, he cries,

By thy Spirit, Lord, reprove,  
 All my inmost sins reveal ;  
 Sins against thy light and love,  
 Let me see, and let me feel ;  
 Sins that crucified my God,  
 Spilt again his precious blood.

And here comes the thunder-shower, the relieving influence, he sorrows for sin, he hates it for its own sake ; and because it is obnoxious to God, to God in Christ, to the divine Savior crucified for that sin, and thus he is led to a real and true repentance towards God.

2. Now take the penitent sinner to the same cross, let him be brought under the same influence ; hope springs up in his bosom ; he sees that God is merciful as well as just ; he rejoices in the hope of pardon and salvation ; he looks and sees the sunshine stealing through the shower, it glistens in the cloud before the shower is over ; and then he looks again, he contemplates more attentively, the troubles of his breast are calmed, his fears are removed, and he forms a proper spiritual estimate of the preciousness of the Savior's blood. When the sinner can be brought to see the atonement in the light in which God sees it, he believes in his heart unto righteousness ; Christ interposes between an offended God and condemned, self-condemned, miserable man ; he points to his blood, the Father looks down upon it, and then

he is ready to pardon, he makes haste to be gracious, he burns to spare the sinner, he wishes him to take the same interest which he does in the atonement of the Son of God, and the same impression from it.—What does he do? he sends his Spirit into his heart, and transfers, or rather communicates something of his own impression of the atonement to the heart of the sinner; the sinner looks up to Christ's blood, his face is towards his God, his face is towards it, by the power of God he is induced to look up for pardon, and then he pardons him freely, he freely justifies him, and by that power the sinner is induced to trust in him for the promised pardon: the moment the sinner so trusts he believes in his heart unto righteousness; he goes home to his house justified, he is made accepted in the beloved, and justified by his blood.

3. Mark its effects upon the Christian, whether newly made in Christ, or the more established Christian. What is its influence upon that character — for instance upon his worship, he goes to the altar of God to worship him; he enters into the temple to offer his sacrifices, he bends his way to the altar of Atonement, he approaches it with reverence and adoration, he makes haste to worship God, he finds the altar of incense sprinkled with the blood of that atonement, the incense ascends and mingles with the wreaths of smoke from the altar of the great atoning sacrifice, and thus becomes acceptable to God. What a stimulus to his activity, for the love of Christ constraineth him! What a support under suffering, for he believes there is no way for him in the time of trial and suffering but to lean upon the Lord, to depend upon his tenderest sympathies, arising out of what he has done and suffered for him; and, therefore, he takes his whole burthen to the cross, and leans upon it with his whole weight; he does not cast his burthen upon God, he does not expect to do so, he is not to be so entirely disengaged from it, “Cast thy burthen upon the Lord and he shall sustain (not it, but) thee.” But he does not suffer his beloved to stoop under the weight of it, he sustains him by his cross: — the Christian leans his weight upon Christ's cross, and he finds that promise true.

And oh, what a support is it in death! If we read the history of the most evangelical and spiritually-minded Christians in the article of death, whose spirits are just about to take their flight to their kindred element, what references do we see them making to the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

Other title I disclaim,  
 This, only this, is all my plea:  
 I the chief of sinners am,  
 But Jesus died for me.



In these moments of parting nature, it possesses an incomparable charm. All things then are but loss to the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus; their desire is then to be found in Christ Jesus, not having on their own righteousness, but that of him who died to purchase pardon for penitent sinners.

I was extremely struck with an incident which, as it bears some relation to this part of my subject, you will excuse my repeating. You are aware that the supplement to our excellent and long-established hymn-book was arranged under the direction of my late friend Mr. Watson. I remember that upon one occasion, having the privilege of conversing with him, he distinctly stated that he suffered pain in his mind in mentioning two or three hymns out of the collections of Doddridge and Toplady; and there was one which he expressed the strongest aversion to introduce into the supplement, chiefly as a matter of taste. The hymn in question had some grammatical improprieties which ought not to be admitted; and besides that, it held too familiar language in reference to our Savior, which he considered ought not to be sanctioned in any of our standards of theology or forms of worship. But I was struck on hearing my excellent friend in his last days in the habit of referring to that very hymn, more than any other, either in the original hymn-book or the supplement, as, through the blessing of God, a source of consolation to him — of dying consolation. We are not, indeed, to wonder that as piety matures it should exhibit an increasing softness, susceptibility, and tenderness: ripe fruit is tender and mellow. This was the hymn which was excluded on the ground of taste, and which was yet found to be so precious a support in the time of trial: —

“Thou dear Redeemer, dying Lamb,  
We love to hear of thee;  
No music's like thy charming name,  
Nor half so sweet can be.”

It thus closes: —

“When we appear in yonder cloud,  
With all the favored throng;  
Then will we sing more sweet, more loud,  
And Christ shall be our song.”

This blood will be the plea in judgment, of those who stand in that great day clothed in the righteousness of Christ — the comprehensive merit and all-powerful efficacy of his blood. It will be their theme, their delight, and their song of rejoicing throughout all eternity, to attest how precious it was to their happiness and their salvation, and how dear to their hearts. Precious is this blood! Oh, be thankful to God for his bountiful provision! Oh, tremble at the idea of trifling

with it, and trampling it under your feet! O Christian, make use of its powerful influence with God for yourself! Hitherto you have asked nothing in Christ's name, nothing worthy of the plea, and the influence and merit of his death, you have hitherto asked nothing: "Ask, and ye shall receive." Ask something, something proportionate to Christ's merit and his death; "Ask and receive, that your joy may be full."

Finally, my brethren, as you have felt the value of this blood in your own case, use all your influence to spread the fame of it among your fellow-creatures. What a shame it is that the world needs these exertions! What a shame it is that effort must be used to propagate a knowledge of its influence, and that this precious blood is not universally welcomed and confided in, — this state of things must be corrected and reversed; — it can only be so by the combined efforts of those who have experienced the value of the atoning efficacy of this blood, and God working with them as his instruments in the great work, and performing mighty spiritual wonders.

Lamb of God, who bear'st away  
 All the sins of all mankind,  
 Bow a world unto thy sway;  
 Let thy dying love constrain  
 Those who disregard thy frown;  
 Sink the mountain to a plain;  
 Bring the pride of sinners down;  
 Soften the obdurate crowd;  
 Melt the rebels with thy blood!

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## SERMON XIX.

THE SCENE OF THE LAST JUDGMENT.

BY REV. R. W. HAMILTON, D. D., L. L. D.

"And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works."—REVELATION xx. 11—13.

IN looking around this congregation, beloved hearers, I feel at this moment well nigh overwhelmed. So many eyes — so many ears — all the organs and the representatives of immortal souls!

Suffer me to relieve my emotions by an allusion to a well-known fact. When Massillon pronounced one of those discourses which have placed him in the first class of orators, he found himself surrounded by the trappings and pageants of a royal funeral. The temple was not only hung with sable, but shadowed with darkness, save the few twinkling lights of the altar; the beauty and the chivalry of the land were spread out before him; the censers threw forth their fumes of incense, and they mounted to the gilded dome. There sat majesty, clothed in sackcloth and sunk in grief. All felt in common, and as one. It was a breathless suspense; not a sound broke upon the awful stillness.—The master of mighty eloquence arose. His hands were folded on his bosom: his eyes were lifted to heaven; utterance seemed denied him; he stood abstracted and lost. At length his fixed look unbent; it hurried over the scene, where every pomp was mixed and every trophy strewn. It found there no resting-place, amidst all that idle parade and all that mocking vanity. Once more it settled; it had fastened upon *the bier*, glittering with escutcheons and veiled with plumes. A sense of the indescribable nothingness of man “at his best estate,” in that hearsed mortal, overcame him. His eye once more closed; his action was suspended; and in a scarcely audible whisper he disturbed the long-drawn pause — “*There is nothing great but God.*”

It would be in vain for me to attempt his power of impression; but it may not be wrong to covet his depth of feeling. And while these words are yet vibrating on your ears, and are harrowing up your souls, I take the abrupt sentence and fit it to the present theme. *There is nothing solemn but Judgment.*

The thunder-storm is solemn; when the lightnings, “as arrows, shoot abroad;” when the peals startle up the nations; when the dread artillery rushes along the sky. But what is that to the far-resounding crash, louder than the roar and bellow of ten thousand thunders, which shall pierce to the deepest charnels, and which all the dead shall hear?

The sea-tempest is solemn: when those huge billows lift up their crests; when mighty armaments are wrecked by their fury; broken as the foam, scattered as the spray. But what is that to the commotion of the deep, when “its proud waves” shall no more “be stayed,” its ancient barriers no more be observed, the great channels be emptied, and every abyss be dry?

The earthquake is solemn: when without a warning cities totter, and kingdoms rend, and islands flee away. But what is it to that tremor which shall convulse our globe, dissolving every law of attraction, untying

every principle of aggregation, heaving all into chaos and heaping all into ruin?

The volcano is solemn : when its cone of fire shoots to the heavens ; when from its burning entrails the lava rushes, to overspread distant plains and to overtake flying populations. But what is that to the conflagration, in which all the palaces and temples and the citadels of the earth shall be consumed ; of which the universe shall be but the sacrifice and the fuel ?

Great God ! must *our* eyes see — *our* ears hear — these desolations ? Must *we* look forth upon these devouring flames ! Must we stand in judgment with thee ? Penetrate us now with thy fear ; awaken the attention, which thy trump shall not fail to command ; surround our imagination with the scenery of that great and terrible day. Let us now come forth from the graves of sin, of unbelief, of worldliness, to meet the overture of thy mercy, as we must perforce start then from our sepulchres to see the descending Judge. Judge us now, that thou mayest not condemn us then. Let thy terror persuade, that it may not crush us.

Yes, it is no illusion. The heavens *shall* be as the shrivelled scroll of parchment ; this solid earth *shall* stagger as the drunken man, and cry as the travailing woman. The period is long since determined, when time shall have completed its course, when probation shall have run its measure, and when all the signs in the present system shall be fulfilled : when “ the stars shall fall ” as the leaves of autumn, when “ the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat,” and “ all these things shall be dissolved.”

It is the day of God. It is “ the judgment of the great day.” — “ And I saw,” says the prophet of the New Testament, “ a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God ; and the books were opened ; and another book was opened, which is the book of life ; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it ; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them ; and they were judged every man according to their works.”

I. LET US CONSIDER THE SCENERY WHICH SHALL ATTEND THIS SUBLIME EVENT.

Let us consider the scenery which shall attend this august assize : the multitude that shall be summoned to it : the process which must adjudicate it.



The "throne" is the emblem of royal dignity. "Only," said Pharaoh to Joseph, "on the throne will I be greater than thou." It is the symbol of Divine supremacy. "The Lord hath established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all."

"His throne is as a fiery flame,  
Rolling on wheels of burning fire."

It is a "throne of glory," which he will "not disgrace." It is a "throne of holiness," which he will remember. It is a throne of mercy, to which we have access. It is a throne which "is for ever and ever." It is a throne which is "high" and which is "lifted up." Sometimes he holdeth back the face of this throne. Sometimes "clouds and darkness are round about him;" "righteousness and judgment," however, are alike its "habitation" and its base.

But *this* "throne" is new to heaven. It is specially prepared; and he sitteth upon it, who judgeth right.

It is "a great white throne." Refulgent in its purity and righteousness; formed of the fleecy vapors, burnished with the radiance of sun-beams, woven from the garniture of the sky. Sunrise and sunset never imprinted that stately purple, that glowing vermilion, that molten gold. It is vast, shadowy, undefined. No rainbow of the covenant girdles it; no suppliants or penitents sue before it; no pardons are issued from it. It is a tribunal throne.

It is occupied. There is One that "sitteth upon it." Sometimes it is distinctively the throne of the Father. *Here* is no room for discrimination — there is no manner of similitude. For need we be at loss? "We must all appear before the judgment seat of *Christ*;" "When *the Son of Man* shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." He is now enshrined with all the splendor, as he ever possessed all the fulness of the Godhead. Sometimes he is "seated with his Father on *his* throne;" sometimes we look forth on "the throne of God and of the Lamb." He now "thinketh it no robbery to be equal with God," and as God he is "Judge himself." And yet we are to be called the idolaters of the nineteenth century, because we "honor the Son even as we honor the Father." Blessed Jesus! if *we* be idolaters, who — what — are the multitudes bending around thy throne, casting their diadems at thy feet, and crowning thee Lord of all?

"From the face" of him who sitteth upon the throne, "the earth and the heaven flee away." He "gave his cheeks to them who plucked off the hair;" they "struck him with the palm of their hand," they "smote him with a reed," they "blindfolded him;" he "hid not

his face from reproach and spitting." Those brows were lacerated with thorns; those eyes overflowed with tears; blood trickled down those channels which violence had furrowed and grief had worn. Into what expressions must that countenance have now kindled! with what terrors must it now be clothed! Things inanimate, insensible, smitten with a strange panic and with a sudden dismay, start back; and those bright heavens and this fair earth shrink into primeval disorder and anarchy and night. But not so can the sinner "flee away;" rocks—mountains cannot cover him; there is no hiding-place for "the workers of iniquity."

Heaven and earth having fled away, "no more place is found for them." It may denote the dissolution of the whole created economy; it may simply refer to the dissolution of our planetary system, with its canopied atmosphere and with all that belongs to it. It makes little difference, whether it be the greater catastrophe or the inferior; the larger could not strike a deeper terror—the smaller could not induce a less. It is all to us, though the universe is rolling in its path; *our* heaven and *our* sky "find no more place." What matters to the animalcule, that noble streams are flowing, when its own drop is exhaled? What matters to the insect, that majestic forests flourish, when its own leaf has decayed? What matters to the emmet, that chains of magnificent mountain heights are mingling with the heavens, when its own hillock is overturned?

And why do heaven and earth pass away? and why is no more place found for them? They have realized their end. They were but as the platform and the scaffolding; the erection is complete. "The mystery of God" is "finished." There is the consummation; and time, therefore, "need be no longer."

Another remark is due to the personage who sends forth an aspect so strange, so glorious, that even heaven and earth cannot endure the sight: it is the crucified One. It is he whose doctrine has been so long a stumbling-block; it is he, who was put to death in weakness and in shame. Complex was his person; mysterious was his investure. But why is *he* the Judge? "All judgment is committed unto him,"—"because he is the Son of man." "God hath appointed to judge the world in righteousness by that man, whom he hath ordained:" of whom he hath given this notification, "that he hath raised him from the dead." The clouds, then, now disperse; that which was hidden is proclaimed; that which was perverted is disabused. Jesus is vindicated; every reproach is rolled away. All will acknowledge that he has made good each challenged right, that he has made clear each suspected transaction, that he has made honorable each aspersed attribute: while the

cross stands up as the very index and basis and trophy of all, and he who now "comes the second time" throws the renown and the triumph of his second coming over all that was misunderstood and misconstrued in the first.

Another remark is also due to the whole of this great and singular process: it is incapable of description and embellishment. We take the scenery as it is delineated; and with that we must satisfy ourselves. It is unsusceptible of exaggeration. If any of us could overleap the boundaries of time, and could see the winding up of the great drama of human events and moral interests, would any of us report that the judgment was too greatly described? that the clangor of the trumpet was not so piercing, that the conflagration of the elements was not so vehement, that the apparition of the rising dead was not so appalling and so strange? Should any of us say that it was overdrawn, and that it had been extravagantly represented? Faint is every metaphor, feeble is every description, unworthy is every imagining, when compared — rather when contrasted — with that which the reality shall prove.

There is "a throne," "a great white throne;" it is occupied by him whom the people despised and the nations abhorred; from his face, suddenly transformed and transfigured, "heaven and earth flee away;" they are superseded in every design and use; but Jesus is vindicated, beholding the honors of his tribunal; and the transaction itself it is impossible to overstate or extravagantly to describe.

## II. WE WILL TURN TO THE MULTITUDE THAT SHALL BE SUMMONED TO IT.

When we have entered a court of justice, there has been one point of concentrated interest and attention. However splendid the forms of its administration, however solemn the functionaries of its exercise, whatever may have been the significance of its types, whatever may have been the dreadfulness of its issues, until law seemed built up into a throned state, and to have been covered with a spotless robe, all — all were forgotten by us while intent upon *the prisoner at the bar*. There he stood; and what a spectacle! The excess of feeling had confounded every feature, until it had lost its power, and was incapable of its expression; and yet how keenly alive was he to every glance that was stolen, to every word that was breathed, bearing upon his case! Then how his eye riveted; how attentive was his ear! Every function and organ of sense seemed to vibrate.

There we saw him — that poor wretch: his countenance of haggard

vacancy, his spirit fallen into dark and torpid despair. He awaited the verdict of his guilt and the sentence of his condemnation.

We were spectators then : we felt but from the force of sympathy. We are now arraigned. We ourselves now are cited. We ourselves must confront this inquest ; we ourselves must stand before this judgment-seat. All are comprehended ; all are summoned. " Come to judgment," " small and great," " the quick and the dead."

Oh ! this innumerable, this untold crowd. It were to insult its vastitude, to compare it to any of the throngs of earth : the millions which Thebes attracted — which Godfrey marshalled — over which Xerxes wept : when whole peoples have been stirred, when mighty nations have risen up, when they have said " A confederacy," when the appeal has been made to a contemporary race and to a listening world.

Who knows the number of that generation of his species, which now fills this earth ? Say that it is 500,000,000, low as is this computation. Begin not to reckon it for a thousand years. Then, from that epoch, you must multiply it at least a hundred and fifty times. Arithmetic has no fictitious figure, by which to include it ; or if it might find the number or the sound, there the index might point, or there the sound might be uttered, but the mind would not be travelling with it — would not be informed by it. Yet some impression may be made upon us, when we think of those that shall " stand in the judgment," by ascertaining the sources whence they are derived.

" The sea gives up its dead." What navies have been shattered, and have been swallowed up by its rage ! Pharaoh and his host : the whole world perished in its overflow. It is insatiable. It has encroached upon the kingdoms and the dwelling-places of men. It is the very emblem of all that is insatiable : human cupidity, aggrandizement, ambition. It conceals that which it has devoured ; but he who said to the waves of Gennesaret, " Peace, be still," shall control the multitudinous oceans of our earth, and then every cavern shall be searched, and every depth shall be sounded. It shall be exacted of its prey.— Each secret now shall then be wrung from it, and all its captives be restored. " The sea gave up its dead."

" Death gave up the dead which were in it." The power of the grave, the personification of death. The deep places of the earth ; for the dry land is but the burying-place of man. Let us think, however painted this scene may be, it is only a painted sepulchre ; we are only treading on the dust of our predecessors, as posterity will soon tread on ours. But he who burst the barriers of the tomb, and made death bow before him — he shall send forth his mandate, publish his behest ; and then the vaults, and the catacombs, and the mummy pits,



and the bone houses, shall disgorge the relics ; and death shall stand extorted as to all it knows, stripped of all it boasts, and the whole of this earth shall seem to stir with motion, and once more to heave with life. The dead shall live. Death is no longer the keeper of the prison-house, but delivers up the dead.

It was much for the sea to obey him who sitteth on the throne ; it was more, for death — the grave — the sepulchre — to yield its victims ; but “ hell ” — the place of departed spirits, where the disembodied soul of man is to be found, whether in happiness or in woe — Hades has listened to a voice, till then unknown to it. The gates of “ the shadow of death ” unbar, and its portals fly open. And now, there come — there come — there come — clouds of spirits rolling upon clouds, in swift succession, with impetuous rush ; sumless, but all individualized ; the consciousness of each distinct, the character of each defined, and the sentence of each anticipated. And Hades sends back spirits to those bodies, which the sea and the grave may no more retain.

“ The small and the great stand before God.” All who have been among the mighty, and would not “ let go their prisoners,” and all of minor name. Attila, Gonsalva, Auringzeb, with their vassals : Cyrus, Alexander, Cæsar, with their battalions : Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, with their disciples : all who ever achieved a name, and all who ever perished without one. None so great that they can intimidate ; none so little that they can be overlooked. “ The small and the great stand before God.”

And looking at that mighty throne, there is a distinctive circumstance which must not be overlooked : “ *Every man* was judged.” — It seems so vast an occasion, it seems so massive an aggregate ; can “ every man ” there find a place ? must “ every man ” there pass an ordeal ? Every man shall there stand apart, bearing his own burden, occupying his own lot. Every man shall there give the account for himself, and not for another. Every man shall there feel as though for him alone that trumpet blast was rung and that blazing conflagration was kindled, and all this sublime tragedy was acted. Every man shall feel that he is noticed, that he is espied, and must be judged out of these books.

There is sometimes a deception we would practise upon ourselves : we think that we may be lost as in that multitude, overlooked as in that crowd. That objection is refuted ; all difficulty is defied. God can say, “ All souls are mine ; ” and all souls, on that day, shall pass in review before him. Each of your “ idle words ; ” each of your “ vain thoughts ; ” each of your impure desires : every bias of your

spirit, every movement of your heart. What a resurrection is that, my brethren! Do I speak of the resurrection of the body! I speak of a resurrection more hideous. We must all "receive the things done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil." All will germinate afresh; all will develop anew. There will then be understood the full doctrine of consequences, and what is the entail in eternity of all we speak, and all we think, and all we desire, and all we transact in time. All is given back to us. Not only the resurrection of our bodies; there is the resuscitation of our deeds.

### III. LASTLY, LET US CONSIDER THE PROCESS THAT MUST DETERMINE OR ADJUDICATE IT.

What a suspense have we felt when we looked at the flying scroll; when we looked upon the seven-sealed Book! But what are they to these registers, on which all our fates depend?

There is a "book of God's remembrance." It is accommodated language, that we may better understand that nothing is forgotten by him. "All our members" are in that book; and in that book "are not even our tears?" God "looks upon the heart;" "God requireth that which is past." These are solemn words: "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things."—"Thou hast set mine iniquities before thee, my secret sins in the light of thy countenance." These are the books.

But that we may more distinctly analyze the figure, let us consider that these books may describe to us the requirements of God's law.—When Hilkiab found the law, and read it to the people, they rent their clothes, awe-struck that they had committed so many offences against a long-forgotten law. When brought home by the Spirit, that rebukes "of sin, of righteousness and of judgment," to the conscience of Saul of Tarsus, a zealot and a persecutor, "sin revived" and as to all hope and as to all expectation instantly "he died." Men make very light of God's law, frame their excuses, offer their exceptions; they have little notion, that this law is "holy and just and good," that it is necessary, that it is inevitable, that it results from infinite perfection, that it is the very goodness as well as the rectitude of the Deity that compels it. They have little notion that it is spiritual in its latitude and comprehensiveness. If they do not outwardly infringe it, they hold themselves freed from every charge, though they lust in their heart—though they covet in their heart—though in their heart they comprise every essence and every root of sin. But *then* that book, which is closed to so many, shall "be opened:" shall be opened in all its requirements, all its penalties, all its sanctions. You will not then

think that its bands are small; you will not then think that its terrors are slight. If the law, by one drop of its present fury, one flash of its present power, causes the stoutest heart and the most rebel conscience to quail, how will the stoutest heart be as tow in the fire, and the most rebel conscience be as wax before the flame, when this book shall be opened?—shall be opened in all its contents, shall be opened in all its precepts, shall be opened in all its awards.

But are there no witnesses? Let memory speak; let conscience appear.

Let memory speak. Now, very frequently, we know its weakness by the rapidity of its transitions, and by the crowd of its images. Very much that we have known is obliterated; very much of former times and former seasons we cannot recall. Yet have you not felt occasionally that you could live over again? There is a suggestive power, there is an associating principle; and one thing seemed to revive another, and though you had not thought upon it and not dwelt among it for years that had transpired, you say it all at once, you felt it all again. And *then*, my brethren, memory will indeed be a faithful chronicle. Memory will be a living present. What will be the burst of all its lights, what will be the irruption of all its facts, what will be the harvest of all its long-buried seeds! Nothing effaced; nothing weakened as to impression; nothing confounded, lost in the mass; but every line distinctly drawn, the “jot and tittle” all fulfilled.

Let conscience speak. Life, with many, is but one prevarication with this, and one endeavor to escape from it. And yet they cannot always prevail. Conscience *makes* itself to be heard. There are those, who in spite of themselves are at this moment “full of the fury of the Lord.” Their souls “meditate terror:” they “roar for the disquietness of their souls.” “The spirit of man may sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?” When all the arrows are barbed deep in that conscience, when all “the fury of the Lord” is poured out on that conscience, when the grievous whirlwind of wrath is pressing upon that conscience, oh! it will distort no tale, it will corrupt no testimony. While memory tells a fact, conscience will only speak a truth.

Brethren, such a law is to be opened; and memory will be an unimpeachable witness then, and conscience will be an unimpeachable witness then. How will you meet their report? How will you counterwork their evidence?

But these “books”—(they are many, they are not a single volume)—may refer to the discoveries of the gospel. And these might in-

deed cheer, and these ought indeed to fortify, if you have “won Christ and are found in him.” But if you are unbelievers still, if you are “enemies in your minds by wicked works,” if you are not reconciled unto God, this book is more portentous in its aspect against you, even than the volume of the law. You will be judged “according to this gospel.” Christ himself exclaimed — “I judge him not; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” All the beseechings of mercy, all the remonstrances of authority, all the pleadings of tenderness: — this book shall be opened only the more terribly to convict and to condemn. Mercy will in that day be more terrible than justice. The cross will be a sight that a sinner will be glad to escape, though by escaping it he sink deeper into the devouring flames. Calvary will be a spectacle that he would gladly avoid, for it is more horror-smiting to him than the burning heaven and the dissolving world.

Brethren, the law brings its condemnation: it is of its nature to condemn the sinner; but the gospel brings its pardon, its reconciliation, its peace. Oppose not — presume not on it. Trifle not with it, lest you die in your sins.

And there is “another book.” It is like the bow in the cloud; it is like the hail on the storm. It is “the book of life.” Then, if we be enrolled in it, it is an act of grace. If we be enrolled in it, we now present a correspondence of character; we have life in us, it dwelleth in us; for the apostle could say of his companions — “Their names are in the book of life.” And if we be enrolled in it, there is here certainty and guarantee; for it is “in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began.” And “the *Lamb’s* book of life;” our names written in his precious blood!

They shall be judged “according to their works.” Not as the foundations of their faith, but as its proofs; not as any thing beyond the symptom, the test, and the trial. But “show me,” says Christianity now — “show me thy faith by thy works.” Christianity, through the lips of its “Author and Finisher,” will say the same in judgment to every formalist and every professor: “Show me thy faith by thy works.” We shall, therefore, be judged every one according to our works — the form our character has assumed, the caste our life has taken, “what manner of spirit we have been of,” what has been the whole state, spirit, practice of our conduct.

“I saw,” said the prophet. He never forgot it. Had we caught a glimpse, surely we could not forget it too. But men say, it is so distant. Distant! “It is appointed unto you once to die;” when will that appointment come? “This night your soul” may be “required



of you." "And after death, the judgment." Immediately: not as to its public ratification, but as to its immediate impression and absolute effect. Judgment distant! an hour may place you there.

You say, it is so vast; so many are included — the swarming multitudes of angels. But your sin is distinct; your spirit stands out from every other spirit that the Divine inspiration ever breathed. And that self, which you understand, however sophists may attempt to puzzle it — that self of yours inheres in you, and lives in you. And it shall be *the same*; so that if you should awaken up in your thought after thousands and thousands of years, long after eternity has unfolded itself, you will be compelled to say — I am the very same I was; this is the same instrument of thinking that I possessed before; this is the same faculty of feeling that I possessed before; I remember that world in which I first received my life; I remember my passage through that world; I am not a transformed being; there is nothing forgotten, nothing evaded, nothing shuffled; I am *the same*. What a thought will that be in eternity, to each one who dies in unbelief, and perishes in rejection of the Savior! "I am that unbeliever, and I am bearing the eternal consequences of that my vile, infatuated unbelief."

But you think it inconceivable. "Is it not painted too strongly? are not the colors overcharged?" The sun rose upon Sodom; but the horrible tempest blasted it ere that noon. There were those, doubtless, in the days of righteous Noah, who, as he adjusted plank after plank for a hundred and twenty years, taunted and scoffed at him! but the world of the ungodly, notwithstanding, was destroyed. Put not your power to conceive against the "sayings" which are "faithful and true." Say not, "Where is the promise of his coming?" "He is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness" — as you are counting it likewise.

And now, go to that Savior, who shall then be the Arbiter and Judge; and bear with you all that you can bear — your poor, your guilty, your miserable self. Urge — plead the cause of your immortal soul. Say to him — "*It is unworthy of thy notice, it is encrusted with a leprosy of crime, but it is my all; Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.*" Ah! thou needest not tell him what is thine all; thou needest not tell him how precious and how invaluable it is to thee as thine all. Has he not died the death? Knoweth he not, that "the redemption of the soul is precious?" Thou hast found thy way, then, to him who "receiveth sinners;" who will in no wise "cast out." — Thine appeal is to a heart of infinite compassion, and thou must prevail.

But what if there be those who determinately resist the overture of mercy, and set themselves against Jesus as a Savior, and his Spirit as

a sanctifier? My beloved hearers, for a moment pause; for a moment bear with me. Did you ever think upon these words — “the wrath of the Lamb?” the wrath, not of “the Lion of the tribe of Judah,” but “of the Lamb.” Not the wrath of him who goeth forth in his indignation; but “the wrath of the Lamb” — the Lamb meek and gentle — the Lamb who was “led to the slaughter” — “the Lamb that was slain.” “The wrath of the Lamb!” What! that emblem of compassion, that incarnation of pity — can there be wrath in him? Wrath in that eye which wept over the perishing sinner? wrath on those lips that only spake of kindness and of love? What meaneth this combination? “The wrath of the Lamb!” Exhausted patience *then*: inflamed mercy *then*; incensed love *then*. No more compassion in infinite compassion; no more love in inexhaustible love. The cross no more propitiates; the blood of expiation no more speaks; “the door is shut;” the very office of Mediator is abdicated; and now there is left but “the wrath of the Lamb!”

Go to him, flee to him, ere that wrath shall be “kindled but a little.” One flake of it would consume you; one manifestation of it would destroy you. It will be too late when all this is realized — “the wrath of the Lamb” — to say, “Rocks! fall on us; hills! cover us.” “The wrath of the Lamb” pierces all. And though, my brethren, you might conceive of the sternness of the Judge, though you might bear up under the conception of the severity and the vengeance of the Almighty, what a hell is reserved for you — a hell that shuts you up for ever, under “the wrath of the Lamb!”

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## SERMON XX.

THE DOUBLE TRANSFER.

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 BY REV. J. BENNETT.  
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Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.— 1 PETER ii. 24.

WERE I to announce to you, as an introduction to my sermon, that I am come to make known to you a medicine which should cure all your disorders; put an end to all your pains; make you all immortal;

what attention should I secure! And yet, I *can* make such an introduction, only with this one remark, that the medicine is for the *soul*, and not for the body. And if any of you should look blank, and say — Is this all? I may return to such inquirers, and say — No: this is not all; for though your bodies be dead, by this they shall live again, and be united in due time to the everlasting Spirit. For this life is as some gallant vessel which takes a little boat in tow; and not only prevents it from being swamped and carried down to the bottom, but causes it to ride safely with it to the destined harbor: thus shall the spirit ransomed bear aloft the body also to a throne of immortality in the presence of God and the Lamb. Come, then, and let me invite you to listen to the apostle's proclamation: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed;" for here is a double transfer announced — a transfer of guilt from the sinner to the innocent; while, on the other hand, the benefit is transferred from the innocent to the guilty.

To the first part of the subject, then, let us bend our attention — a transfer of guilt from the sinner to the innocent. If any one be shocked at this language, I call upon him to receive it as truth, unless he would have us renounce our hope, and in despair say, Heaven is lost! And we are but embryos of lost spirits! for he must acknowledge that we are sinners: this all confess; and, if we die guilty, we go from the place of judgment to the place of perdition. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Man being a sinner, in the ordinary and strict course of justice, nothing remains but this. And if you allow these things to be so, I ask you whether you must not be prepared to meet with something strange in the gospel? And accordingly, here you find it. For,

1. *The sin was ours.* This the apostle declares plainly. A preacher is expected to define his subject — but how shall I define sin? It is too deep to be explained — too dark to be examined; like the hell to which it leads, too horrible to be dwelt upon. The apostle calls it, "exceeding sinful." Sin is not only the *worst* thing in the universe, it is the *only* evil thing: take away this, and there is no evil in the universal world. All penal evil is only the consequence of moral evil. There is in sin an intrinsic evil. Sin is an evil which has in it no amelioration: it is evil, and only evil, and evil continually. But whatever sin be, we have committed it, and it is *ours*. And you will observe, that the apostle uses the *plural* "our *sins*" they are many: — "My sins," said one, "are more in number than the hairs of my head." — Who can tell his errors? Were I to ask the best arithmetician to cast

up the amount, he would declare that he had no powers by which to express the mighty sum. One penitent, when looking back on the sins of his life, cried out, "Infinite, infinite!" And if one said so of the sins of *one*, what may we say of them *all*, when they are all thrown together as in one joint stock, and we say "our sins!" Who can tell their number then? Surely, then, we must multiply infinite by infinite. Yet such were the sins which were laid on the Lord; for,

2. *The burden was his.* Yes, though the sins were ours, the burden was his;—he, "his own self, bare our sins." The Scriptures employ a variety of figures to denote the same thing: sometimes sin is spoken of as a debt, but he paid it;—as a disease, but he endured it; as a burden, but he sustained it. That was a burden which "fools make a mock" of; and which to most men is a "trifle, light as air;" but O, it will be bitterness in the end! One cried out, "My sins are heavier than the sands of the sea! My spirit is drunk up by the poison of the arrows of God!" O, my dear hearers, were you awake to a sense of your real state, you would enter into the views of a poor man, who said to a minister, a friend of mine, "Sir, I seem as if a heavy weight of lead were lying on my heart!" O, there is no bearing up against it, when it is brought home to the conscience by the Holy Spirit! "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear" "When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? And when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? And if he make a man to feel that he is displeased; that the Almighty has no favor to him in his present state; and that there is no heaven for him hereafter, no language can describe the weight that is on the spirit of such a man!"

Yet this weight Christ bore! Not the burden of having committed these sins—not the shame of conscious transgression! No: he "did no sin, and in his mouth no guile was found." Nothing but a lamb, "without spot and blemish," could be placed on God's altar; and unless Christ had been a lamb "without spot and blemish," he never could have been "the Lamb of God." But the burden of the agony; the burden of a just sense of the anger of God against sin; the burden of the ignominy and shame;—all these laid heavy on his soul. He complained in agony; he sorrowed even unto death. No pain was inflicted, as yet, on his body; there was, as yet, no stroke to bring forth blood, yet the very anguish of his soul caused him to "sweat as it were great drops of blood." And, through life, he looked not like a man of spotless innocence, all light, and gay, and buoyant; he was always as a man ashamed. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted;" he looked like a man who was "stricken and smitten of God;" he had



the constant appearance of "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." He knew what it was to bear a burden on his spirits; and it was our sins which lay heavy on his soul.

But the apostle speaks with emphasis here, and he says, "who *his own self* bare our sins." "His own self!" As if the apostle would remind you of the *dignity* of his nature; the purity of his character; the excellence of his life; the greatness of his sacrifice. That the king should take upon him the crimes of his subjects! That the fountain of justice and purity should be arraigned at an earthly tribunal, and become liable to suffer as a worker of iniquity. "His own self!" As if the apostle would remind you, too, of his *ability*; of one "mighty to save!" of one whose "own arm brought salvation;" of one who was Almighty; of one who, when he took this heavy burden upon him, proved clearly that he was able to bear it all.

The Apostle reminds you, too, that this was done "*in his own body.*" Not that his body suffered chiefly, or only; the most affecting scene of his agonies was before his body suffered; and on the cross he complained chiefly of mental agony:—"My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" But it was only by taking a *body* upon him that he could be made of the seed of David according to the flesh, though he was still "God over all" according to the Spirit. And it was in the body that he was to suffer; it was during his abode in the flesh alone that he could do this; and when his body had suffered all that was required, "he said, It is finished! and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

The apostle adds, "*on the tree.*" "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree;" alluding to the cross of wood on which he suffered, which was made from a tree, and to remind us, also, it is probable, of the way in which we fell. By one tree we fell, by another we rise. By eating of the forbidden tree we fell; by believing in the true cross we live. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ."

But you say, *How could it be that one could suffer for another?* I return to meet your inquiry. I ask you, Do you believe the account which is given of his agonies and death? I can account for these but in three ways. First: That Christ was guilty, and deserved to suffer; at this you are shocked. Then the second is scarcely better; that a just and holy God punished him, an innocent person, without any cause, as a vile, wicked person deserved to be treated. And if you reject these two reasons, there remains only a third, which is the doc-

trine of the text — that Christ endured all these various woes that he might bear the burden of our sins; that he might offer himself as a spotless victim to the divine justice; and that God, who cannot pass by sin, might, in visiting in wrath the person of our surety, effectually punish sin, and visit the sinner in mercy and in grace.

If you still argue, how can this be? I answer, that God has, from the first, acted towards the human race uniformly in a wonderful manner. *Angels* sinned singly; they fell singly; they were punished singly. But with *man* it was otherwise — the first man was created at the head of all his race. God acts towards men as a kind of mass. God not only in the natural world has made one man, and from that one caused all others to spring to the end of time, but he has acted thus in a *moral* point of view also. *We* all fell in the first man; he sinned, and we are sinners too, because of him. If, then, you regard this representative government in reference to man, where can be the difficulty of his so acting to Christ? Surely you can more readily conceive how God can *show favor* to some, because he is pleased with one, than you can how he should be *displeased* with many because of the transgression of one? You admit the first and most difficult part of the subject; why not admit the second, which is, that God could accept of the sufferings of one for the good of many?

Secondly, therefore, let us notice the transfer of benefit from the innocent to the guilty. When the apostle spake of the consequence of guilt, it was all Christ's; now he comes to speak of the benefit, we are included. Of the former he says, "Who *his own self* bare our sins in his own body on the tree." Of the benefit, he says, "that *we*, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed." And in these words we are taught that the death of Christ must be the death of sin in us; that the death of sin must be the life of righteousness; and that this will show that our souls are healed through his stripes.

1. We are here taught *that the death of Christ must be the death of sin in us*. "That we, being dead to sin." Before we were alive to him, we were alive to nothing else but sin, though it was the very worst kind of life. Death and life are sometimes strangely mixed — as when a corpse is so putrid as to become the prey of worms, you say it is alive — it is all alive! A strange expression to use as to what is so *very* dead! So the Apostle speaks of "walking according to the course of this world" when we were "dead in trespasses and sins." But to be dead to sin, O it is a grand affair! Let us take care that there be no deception here. Many suppose that they are dead to sin because they are almost dead in body; or because they are half dead

through fear ; or because, by old age, they are become weak and impotent.

*Under affliction* a man sees himself half dead in body, and then he fancies sin is dead. "Oh!" he cries, "I see how sinful I have been! O, what an awful thing sin is! O, if God does but spare me, how will I live to him!" Well, God does spare him, and then the proverb is fulfilled, "When the sick man became well he was worse than before." And really such men sin with such eagerness, that they seem to be trying to make up for lost time ; they are more greedy after sin because of their short fast. My hearers, if you are afflicted, and no change takes place, you may be sure that sin is not dead. I warn you, by all the terrors of eternity, against the delusion of supposing, that because you yourselves are half dead by sickness, that therefore sin is dead in you.

Again : some suppose that they are dead to sin, because *by alarm of mind*, they are half dead *through fear*. Thus we read of Nabal, that when his wife told him what had been threatened him by David, "his heart died within him, and he became as a stone." When they witness the death of a dear friend, or see some one drop down dead by their side, or hear of some dreadful and alarming accident, and thus they themselves are half killed by terror, they imagine sin is dead. But time does wonders : the terror is softened down ; the fluttering hearts become composed ; and they turn away to iniquity as before. Just as a man about to be gibbeted for his crimes, suddenly receives a reprieve, and then turns to all his crimes again, though he had every mark of penitence when he supposed death near. A poor woman was once about to commit suicide ; she did what she imagined would cause her death ; the Doctor did all he could, though he considered that all would be in vain ; *then* she died, indeed, to sin ; but some symptoms of returning strength began to appear, and *from that very moment* there were also symptoms of apostacy ! No, my hearers, there is no dependence to be placed on the disgust with sin which is occasioned by the fear of death.

The same may be said of *old age*, and of persons *going out of the world*. Because the power to sin has left them ; because they can no longer eat or drink, or taste or see ; because they are become half dead, a sort of carcases upon the earth ; — they imagine themselves to be dead to sin. But, O, if they could have new blood infused into the veins, we should at once see all their sins spring up into vigor and activity as before !

The fact is, that there is no death to sin but through the death of Christ. Is it not said, "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree,

that we might be dead to sins?" And if we could have been dead to sin without this, would he have endured all his agony and shame, and at length have died upon the cross? No: it is a stab *at the heart* that is fatal; and never are we struck to the heart till we see Christ, the innocent, becoming our sacrifice, taking our load upon him, and enduring unutterable anguish on our account. Then are we touched to the heart; we feel to the quick; we are alive to a sense of what he endured for us. Then we say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Jesus, my Lord!" Then, when pressed under the load of sin, we behold him bearing our burden, and our hearts are made light and gladsome. Then love melts us, and mercy brings us down; and henceforth we die to that accursed thing which brought our Lord to his death. Then we become "dead to sins;" as a cancer is not eradicated from the human frame till every fibre is removed; so the cancer, of sin is not wholly destroyed in our souls till we become dead to sin through Jesus Christ our Lord.

2. We are taught that *the death of sin must be the life of righteousness*. There is to be a death; but there must also be a life. Christ said to the Jews, God is not the God of the dead, but of *the living*; for all live unto him: so he that is "*dead to sin*" by the cross of Christ, is, by the same cross, made "*alive to righteousness*." There is a vitality in religion; and the soul is not only made alive, but lively. "To be carnally minded is death;" — a poor, dull thing, at best: — "to be spiritually minded, is life and peace." At the same time, that there is calmness in our own souls, we are all activity for the good of others. I always pity a man who is going on in a cold, dull, heavy, lead-like manner; and if it does not speak doubt as to the existence of religion, it speaks a volume as to its want of excellence. There is a life in all true religion; it has but little of the snail about it. If we are, indeed, dead to sin, we shall be all alive to righteousness. I love to see a people alive; all among them aiming to do good — good to all around them: their heads full of schemes, their hearts full of love, their hands full of gifts for his honor and glory.

3. *All this shows that our souls are healed by his stripes*. There is a reference in these words to the 53d of Isaiah — "With his stripes we are healed." And the words in both places refer to his scourging in Pilate's hall. The word stripe signifies a *wale*; where, in consequence of a blow or cut from a lash, the extravasated blood is seen in a blackish, bluish form, under the skin. But, because this is spoken of as one, the learned Vitringi supposes that it applies to one wound, the body of Christ being wounded all over. He was all stripe and pain;



we are all ease and pleasure. "By whose stripes ye were healed."— And how is healing indicated? By three signs:—

*By disease prevented in action.* Physicians aim at this: time and nature, they say, will do all the rest. O what a disease is sin! All that is seen and said, and acted under its influence, is *wrong!* But when we come to be healed by the stripes of Christ, diseased action ceases: we see aright, both as to ourselves and as to our Savior; we hear aright, for "blessed are the people that know the joyful sound;" we feel aright, there is a pleasant glow through our whole frame; all our various powers act aright, for the glory of God, and the benefit of ourselves and others.

*By the removal of agonizing sensation,* healing is indicated. All the disordered actions we perform in a state of nature produce only wretchedness. Many a sinner, who seems happy, wishes he were a reptile or a brute. Colonel Gardiner, who was known by the name of "the happy rake," on seeing a dog come into a room one day, wished he were that dog! But this disease yields to the healing power of the cross of Christ. Does a child of God, does a man healed by the stripes, by the cross of Christ, wish he were a dog, or wish he had never been born? No: many times a day he blesses God that ever he was born at all; and he hopes to live to eternity, and rejoices that he shall live through everlasting ages. Healing is indicated, also,

*By the obviating of threatening danger.* This is an important thing in cases of disease: it is the danger which hangs over the patient that alarms him. It is not merely the pain and languor — at these he could smile; but he fears that he shall die, and that there is something after death, which, though unknown, makes him wretched beyond measure. There is danger, but healing removes this danger; renews the prospect of life for many years to come, and so restores tranquillity and pleasure. And so it is here — healing by the wounds of Christ obviates the threatened danger. There is no more fear of death; no, that is past: there is no more dread of eternity; no, for that is lighted up with glory. These are the blessed consequences of healing by his stripes, "who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness."

And now to apply. And here I shall not proceed according to the usual course of inquiry, and ask you, *first*, if you are diseased: — this I know; I know that you are all so. But I will ask you, if you have *felt* your disease? A sinner is like a man frost-bitten — he would fain sleep; he would lie down in the snow though he knows that by so doing he must die! and his friends are obliged to use great force to rouse him, and to keep him from dropping off to sleep. O, sin is a lethargy of the most

dreadful kind! If physical sounds could waken, I could wish for a voice of thunder, and for lungs of brass, that I might cry, "Awake, thou that sleepest! What meanest thou, O sleeper? O awake, arise!" But ah! 'tis not the voice that reaches the ear, 'tis not physical exertions that can accomplish this. 'Tis the mind that is diseased! 'tis the mind that must be brought to see and feel. O come, and let mind have intercourse with mind! let me speak to your immortal spirits. Must not your spirits have been lost, but for him who "bare your sins in his own body on the tree? O come and let us linger round the cross, and mark all the ignominy, the pains, the agony, the blood! Why was all this? What had *he* done? He had done nothing but what was lovely and meritorious; it was all for others; it was all for the guilty. Then, have you obtained an interest in it? Have you ever become "dead to sins, and alive to righteousness?" Has there ever sprung up within you a concern for your souls — for righteousness — for salvation — for everlasting glory? If not, you are not yet interested in the death of Christ.

There must be a union with Christ. In order that he might be united to us, he became a man. Angels were not bettered by his coming, for he never became an angel. There must, I repeat it, be some union with him: we must, ourselves, feel something of the agony of the cross operating upon our minds, and teaching us the evil of sin — the danger of our souls — the wonders of his love — the faithfulness of his promise; we must venture our whole souls upon him, we must cast ourselves alone on the mercy of the Savior. Has there been this personal intercourse with Christ? If not, do not flatter yourselves that you are any better for his bearing the burden of sin, "in his own body upon the tree." But if you are not, such a burden,— a burden at which God so expressed his abhorrence,— *still* lies heavy on your souls! And if you go out of the world, and such a burden presses upon you, how low do you suppose it will sink you? Who can tell?

—— "in the lowest deep, a lower deep  
Still threat'ning to devour you, opens wide!"

"Who among you can dwell with everlasting burnings?" Your "feet shall slide in due time." Do you exclaim, Where then shall I flee? Flee to him "who, his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree." But will he receive me? Will he not receive you? Wherefore did he bear that heavy burden? He did not bear it for nothing; and when he sees you casting yourselves at his feet as a penitent, he sees "of the travail of his soul." and he will blot out your offences,

and say with exultation, "Now I am glad I died, for that poor sinner lives!"

O let these who are alive through Christ, cherish the warmest gratitude! Live to righteousness alone. Never trifle with your souls. Seek to enjoy more and more of that healthful state of mind which is to you a pledge of everlasting bliss in the presence of God.

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## SERMON XXI.

EARTHLY THINGS TRANSITORY, HEAVENLY THINGS SUBSTANTIAL.

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 BY REV. JAMES BROMLEY.  
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"The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever." — ISAIAH xl. 6—8.

THE chapter out of which my text is taken, is, perhaps, the most magnificent piece of verse ever penned by any author, of any age. Its dignity, its energy, its sublimity, its point, are without parallel in the language of man. By the common consent of Christian expositors, the text and its connection have reference to Gospel times; and, indeed, we have the authority of the New Testament writers also, in applying it to John the Baptist, as the forerunner of Christ, and to Christ himself.

It seems to have been the custom of the monarchs of antiquity, whenever they went on any expedition, to send a herald before them to announce their approach, to level mountains, to raise valleys, and to remove every impediment out of the way. King Messiah is here represented as about to commence that career of conquest, of glory, and of salvation, which is destined never to terminate, till all the nations of the world shall become the kingdoms of our God, and of his Christ. His messenger, John the Baptist, is said to go before him to prepare his way: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh

shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." When this work was done, command was given to make another proclamation: — "The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry?" to which the answer seems to be, in order to illustrate the worth, the truth, the excellency, and the dispensation about to be given to the world; to put it in contrast with all which the world contains — with all that forms the pride, the dignity, the glory of man: cry this — "All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the Spirit (or wind) of the Lord bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

With an authority certainly much less, but, in a sense, as real, every genuine minister of the word of God is called upon to make proclamation of the vanity and nothingness, of the fleeting, transitory nature of all worldly good. And, to say the truth, this is one of the exceptions taken to his character: he is called a harbinger of trouble, of sorrow, and of tears; the plaints of distress are supposed to follow in his train; and his discourses are often shunned and disregarded. But this does not alter the nature of things; this does not stamp value on that which is valueless. I smile when I see a gay young man turn away from a discourse on the vanity of earthly things; but this does not change his state. The patient may chase from his chamber the honest physician who tells him his real state; but that does not make him less a dying man.

I propose to set before you from the text, *first*, the transitory nature of all earthly things; and, *secondly*, the durability of that dispensation of truth with which God has blessed the world.

#### I. THE TRANSITORY NATURE OF ALL EARTHLY THINGS.

"All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field." Let us consider some of those things which constitute the goodness and the glory of man, and see how they justify the assertion in the text. They are,

1. *Personal endowments of beauty and of form.* We make our boast of beauty; of the sparkling eye; of comely features. We make our boast of strength; of the muscular, well-built form; of the strong, athletic frame; of dexterity and activity. Small is our cause for boast! That body which seemed to concentrate in it all that was beautiful and charming; see it when wasted by accidents and by time — when brought down by sickness — when blasted by the touch of death! Look at it: — where the eye once danced with joy, the slimy reptile



crawls and riots! Where is the beauty of form? exhaled in putrescent air; odious and disgusting. Look at that muscular man, whose shoulder the hand of sickness has brought down to dust, and made food for reptiles and for worms! Look at him now, and then feel and confess the force of the representation in the text — “All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field.” Perhaps it is not possible to choose a more appropriate figure: — a flower is one of the most beautiful objects in nature. In the swiftness of its growth — the delicacy of its form — the elegance of its colors — and the exquisiteness of its fragrance, — it is an emblem of youth; but it is an emblem of its *dangers* too! Nipt by the chilling wind — or plucked by the ruthless hand — or trodden by the foot of violence! it is first spoiled, and then cast out as worthless!

“ So blooms the human face divine,  
 When youth its pride of beauty shows;  
 Fairer than spring the colors shine,  
 And sweeter than the virgin rose.  
 Or worn by slowly rolling years,  
 Or broke by sickness in a day,  
 Thy fading glory disappears,  
 The short-liv'd beauties die away.”

The text may be illustrated,

2. *By adverting to the wisdom*, as well as to the beauty and strength of *man*. Since the attention of man was first directed to the objects of nature, what an innumerable succession has there been of notions, of systems, of theories, of hypotheses, almost without end. And yet each in their day was regarded as truth: the abettors of them laid down their arguments — came to conclusions — and said, all this is true; all this is demonstration. And yet *we* look on these ill-digested systems as belonging only to days which are gone by, and as now utterly exploded; and we imagine that the perfection of science, the perfection of art, the perfection of philosophy, has been reserved for *our* times. Alas for us! there will rise up another generation; and they will look back on the nineteenth century, and, in their turn, smile at the shallowness of our science, and laugh at the puny knowledge which we acquired. For the fact is, that all knowledge, except that which is derived from the Bible, is destined to pass away. “Whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.”

3. Advert to the transitory nature of *those things which are the produce of the imagination and taste*. Whatever the pencil of the painter has portrayed; whatever the chisel of the sculptor has wrought; whatever the skill of the architect has reared; whatever is accounted rare or beautiful; whatever general consent has declared to be valuable;

all these are destined shortly to be destroyed. This may be demonstrated; the fine arts, as they are termed, were never carried to a greater degree of perfection than in Athens and Greece; never did science appear so fully to triumph. But time has trampled down all their magnificence and glory; and barbarians have trodden under foot the monuments of art they were incapable of appreciating. And shall the fine arts of Great Britain share a better fate? Ah, no! all that which fascinates our attention, or engages our study, is doomed to be swept away into eternal oblivion by the resistless hand of time. This should convey a very forcible reproof to those who expend so large a portion of their time in the embellishments of life, in dress, and in furniture, and in equipages. I grieve when I see an immortal soul which is to be in a few days in heavenly glory or in hell fire; when I see that soul convulsed, tossed, elated, by some trifle which the wind of heaven will to-morrow consign to eternal oblivion! If we must be excited, let it be by something which will remain! The truth of the text appears,

4. *In reference to the possessions of men*, — wealth and fortune, and their concomitants, — grandeur, eminence, pomp, and luxury. It is a remarkable fact, that God has been pleased to make these pass from nation to nation — from family to family — from man to man. “*Riches* certainly make themselves wings; they fly away, as an eagle toward heaven;” — and yet it is on riches that the hearts of men, corrupted and degenerate, generally fix. All men, but those whose souls are purged from low desire and fixed on the things which are above, set their hearts on gold; and yet, under the sun, there is not another gift more fluctuating. Look at those who came over to this country at the time of the Norman conquest. They took possession of the lands of this fair isle; they called them after their own names; they left them to their heirs; and they enjoyed them for a few generations. But their posterity have sunk into complete obscurity; other families have been fetched out of the obscure crowd, and from the very dung-hill have come to be kings and nobles in our land. Poets have a very significant way of stating this: — fortune, as they term it, is represented with a wheel in perpetual motion; the radius that now lifts the individual towards heaven is gradually lowered, till it turns in the dust; it then begins to rise, and points again to the skies. Such is the succession of grandeur and of wealth!

5. As strikingly is this illustrated by the emptiness of that shapeless thing, — that shadow of a shade, in which you have, no doubt, anticipated my application, — that thing called *fame*. You have observed on a fine sky, a cloud: it has taken this form, and that form, and

your fancy has given it many forms : you have looked again, and you could not find it — it has passed away for ever ! Such is the form, the something, pursued for years, bestowed by folly and ignorance, enjoyed for a moment, and followed by loss, reproach, and ignominy ! Such is that worthless thing called popularity ! O, if my soul, in an unguarded moment has fixed its thoughts upon it, forgive the folly ! and let me be placed in any situation, however low, where I may please Him ; rather than in any situation, however eminent, where honor and piety are to be placed at the feet of popular applause ! and yet, how eager are men for it ! The poet's song, the historian's record, the trophied column, the monument of marble or of brass,— have all been employed to perpetuate the monarch's and the hero's fame. But do we know anything so calculated to stamp folly upon this, as the very means which are employed to perpetuate it ?

6. See it illustrated, also, as to *dominion and power*. Kingdoms and empires rise and fall — flourish and decay. Thrones are overturned ; crowns are transferred ; sceptres are broken ; dynasties are overthrown. Where are now Persia, Babylon, Assyria, Nineveh, and Rome ? Daniel saw the mighty monarchies represented as a great image, the head of which was of fine gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, the feet part of iron and part of clay. The catastrophe of this image also is supplied : — a stone cut out of the mountain smote the image and brake it in pieces, and it became “ like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them.” An instance of this has occurred in our own times : — the day is not very distant when the name of Napoleon was feared by many hearts. Conquest seemed to be given into his hands ; the angel of Victory accompanied him in his march and the angel of Desolation followed in his train. He bestowed thrones at his will, as trifles ; empires were too narrow for him ; and his armies carried their successes over half the world. His dominion seemed to be a fair and beautiful fabric : its foundations were deep — its superstructure rose high — its turrets touched the skies. But it was all a shadow ; and, touched by a spear in an Almighty hand, it vanished as though it had never been ! But why do I dwell on these things ? For,

Finally, *The world itself* is an illustration of the sentiment in the text. The globe itself, on which we dwell, after it has borne generation after generation, — the great globe itself, is appointed to be the last and most affecting illustration of this truth. Since the world first came out of the hands of its Maker, what changes has it undergone, by diluvian waters, or by subterranean fires ! And it is soon destined to pass away. The figure in the text is almost as applicable to



the world, as it is to anything connected with the present life. And as a person, accustomed to behold a beautiful flower in a parterre, should retire for a moment, and, on returning, behold that beautiful flower gone; so we may conceive will angels and archangels one day turn their eyes to the spot where they had been accustomed to behold this glorious orb, the world, and, to their astonishment, find it gone from its sphere, struck from the works of God! "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and all the works that are therein, shall be burnt up."

This may seem to be somewhat of a departure from the object of our present assembly; yet, as the Holy Spirit has put these things in contact, I thought it right to dwell upon them. It will, however, be a relief to myself, and, no doubt, to you, to turn from the meditation in which I have indulged, to a subject more in unison with the high hopes which swell the bosoms of those who are now before me; namely,

## II. THE DURABILITY OF THAT DISPENSATION WITH WHICH GOD HAS BEEN PLEASED TO BLESS THE WORLD.

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but *the word of our God shall stand for ever.*" This sentiment is greatly illustrated, and abundantly confirmed, by,

1. *The utter impotence of persecution.* All that the ingenuity of the devil could invent, or the cruelty of man inflict, has been tried to extirpate the spirit of religion from the world. From the day that the spirit of Antichrist tasted the blood of the first martyr, Stephen, thousands have fled for safety to the forest wilds; thousands more have been shut up to perish in the dungeon's gloom; thousands more have parted with life upon the cruel rack; while thousands more, in the midst of flames, have born their testimony to the truth. What innumerable methods, one after another, have been tried to stop the progress of the truth! but they have been tried in vain; or, rather, the rage of persecution has been followed by an increase of the disciples of the Son of God. A learned friend has ventured an opinion, that at no period of the church's history has there been found a real decline in the numbers of the friends of truth. And there is considerable weight in the opinion; such outpourings of the Spirit — such secret influence on the minds of men — such effect from the examples of heroic sufferers, on the consciences of the beholders, — that "the blood of the martyrs" has truly become "the seed of the church." Sometimes, it is true, persecution has appeared to triumph; the demon has appeared to tread



the cause of the Redeemer under foot ; but it has only been in appearance. Like the fabled Phœnix, the church has risen from the flames, stretched her pinions for a loftier flight, dashed down the monuments which her foes had reared to perpetuate her overthrow ; and gone on from conquest to conquest, spreading the glory of her Master, and promoting the happiness of men. Nor ought it to escape our recollection, that the word of our God has been assailed ; but even heathens have perceived the influence of the sacred writings on the lives of Christians. And where the same spirit prevails, and while the cause of truth is dear to our hearts, the cause must prevail. The sentiment in the text may be illustrated and confirmed by noticing,

2. *The utter failure of the opposition of Infidelity.* The manner in which infidelity has stood in the way of the truth of Christ, is highly interesting in itself. It has varied the methods of its assaults ; but, in all, it has only illustrated and proved the excellency of the dispensation of truth. Sometimes its opposition has been coarse, rude and vulgar. Pens deeply dipped in filth have assailed the holiness of truth. Low jests, loose ribaldry, obscene wit, have been hurled at the Christian's serious thoughts of God — of Christ — of death — of eternity. The sophist's art, also, has been called in to oppose the system of truth ; and that system by which the martyrs were upheld in death ; that system which had triumphed over the attacks of Julian and Porphyry ; that system which had stood successfully against the fury of the Cæsars ; that system which had stood the test of eighteen centuries ; that system which had taught so many thousands how to live and how to die ; — that system has been assailed by the fine-spun theory of a Gibbon ; and a finely-wrought syllogism was supposed to be powerful enough to destroy it ! I would respect the man that, with fairness and candor, attempted to oppose the system of revealed truth ; but when in a matter so serious, — a matter which involves the everlasting interests of immortal men, — I am met with a jest or a farce, and a quibble is converted into an attack upon the truth ; a madman is to me the emblem of wisdom ! In many cases, the poison has been mixed up with many sweets ; the serpent lay concealed amidst beautiful flowers ; and his fiery aspect, his forked tongue, and his deadly venom, were not perceived till it was almost too late. Yet, in reality, all these attacks have but established the truth which they were designed to overthrow. Christianity overthrown ! My brethren, let us not fear investigation ; let us not fear that there ever can come a time when the truth of God can fail. Fail ! what have we been talking about ? as if the truth of God were to fall before its foes ! It cannot be ; it is like a strong fortress on the summit of an everlasting rock ;

some of her friends, through carelessness, have been entertaining suspicions that the fortress will be taken by storm, or that it will fall down; and they have brought to the foot of the rock a quantity of straw and sand to support it! The affected knowledge of the infidel, the bitter sarcasms, and the haughty sneers of the worldling, have swept away, as with a mighty gale, the straws and sands at the base of the rock; but what has become of the fortress? She has stood firm amidst all the storms; all her proportions are as fair as ever; her turrets still touch the skies; and there she stands, more glorious in the eyes of her friends, more terrific to the gaze of her foes! Let her stand by herself, and she will stand for ever. The declaration in the text may be illustrated, by adverting

3. *To the blessed and delightful spread given to it in our day.* We cannot contemplate, without considerable emotion, what has been done in the days in which we live. Since we first saw the light of heaven, what a wide diffusion has been given to the word of God! In regions shut up in the darkness of Atheism, or the gloom of superstition — over many such a land has the gospel of our God spread itself. Sometimes it has proceeded silently, and at other times visibly, in its course. In many a deep savanna, where nothing was once heard but the war whoop of the savage, has the cheering name of our Emmanuel been sung. Over many a plain where superstition only uttered her melancholy moans, has Christian prayer and Christian praise been heard, conveying delight to the hearts of men, and joy to the hosts of heaven. An infidel author, of base and execrable memory, undertook what he called an impartial view of Scripture, in order to demonstrate that it was not what it professed to be; and, after having gone through the books of the Old Testament, he concludes with this language of singular arrogance — “I have now gone through these books; gone through them as a woodman would go through a wood, with an axe, clearing his way as he went. I have cut them down, and here they are. The priests, if they please, may stick them in the ground again; but *they will never grow.*” It is now nearly forty years since the hand that wrote this has been buried in the dust; but the soul that indited the sentence has gone to take its stand at the tribunal of the just and righteous Judge; “the Judge of all the earth,” who will assuredly “do right.” Whether his body is buried in America or in England, I know not; but, O Lord, gather not the soul of thy servant with the soul of the wicked and profane! But let us return to the time when these prophets and apostles were said to be “cut down.” Since that period, the British and Foreign Bible Society has multiplied these prophets and apostles by hundreds and by thousands! School Socie-

ties have risen up to put it in the power of hundreds and of thousands to read the prophets and apostles thus circulated! Since that time also originated Missionary Societies! the Church Missionary Society — the London — the Baptists — our own. All these have arisen, and by their active exertions have spread those prophets and apostles wider still! The prophets and apostles “*cut down?*” No such thing! They are planted on the banks of the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi; and there they are to be seen, vigorous and strong. “Cut down” the prophets and the apostles? No such thing! They have been planted upon the sun-burnt shores of Africa, and there they afford refreshment and shelter to the neglected children of the South. The prophets and the apostles “*cut down?*” Nothing of the kind. They have taken root on the populous plains of Hindoostan, and there they are diffusing their corrective influence on the poisonous systems which have hitherto prevailed in those populous climes. “Cut down” the prophets and apostles? No such thing. They are planted in the islands that speck the bosom of the Pacific Ocean; and they have been found congenial to the clime — purifying it from its numerous evils. “Cut down” the prophets and the apostles! Oh no, no! their roots have struck deep — their branches have spread — their tops touch the sky; they afford shelter for birds of every wing; they are continually yielding their fruit, and “their leaves are for the healing of the nations.” “The word of our God shall stand for ever.” This may be illustrated further, if we

4. Advert to the fact that the dispensation of truth with which God has blessed the world is also *the dispensation of the Spirit*. If I prove that the Bible is in all your houses, and that it rests on your tables and your shelves, I prove but little, — a mere book is nothing. But this is a book of the Spirit — a book of inquiry. The word of our God is *a living word*: it is not only a dispensation of words, addressed to the understanding and will, but a dispensation of the Spirit coming to the heart of man. If I wanted the proof of this, I would seek it among yourselves. Is there in this large and interesting assembly a man who ever felt the burden of a guilty conscience? one who ever mourned over the evils of his past life, and the evil dispositions of his own heart? Was it not, I ask, by some truth of the Spirit of your God? Was it not by some one single word, which entered as an arrow into your heart, and the poison of which drank up your spirits? It was. Or is there in this assembly one who ever knew what it was to receive the tokens of the forgiving love of God? one who can come nigh unto his throne — who can call him Father by the Holy Ghost? one who ever felt the peace, the hope, the joy, the love, of the gospel springing up in the soul? I ask, Was



not some dear, soul-afflicting word of our God — some gracious promise applied by the Spirit, — that brought thee into this happy state? Is there here a man who can resist temptation — who can guard the door of his lips and his heart — who, in adversity, can rejoice — who, in a dark and cloudy day, can put his trust in his Father and his God? Was it not, I ask, because the word of our God was applied by the Spirit to the heart, carrying joy and gladness with it?

I am glad, exceedingly glad, that “*the word of our God shall stand for ever.*” I find myself a poor worm of the earth, exposed to a thousand temptations and disasters — exposed to a thousand circumstances of trial and danger, over which I have no control; I find that I am one of a multitudinous race of men; I find that this land in which I dwell is but a speck on the face of the globe; I find that this globe is but one in a system, of which it makes but a very small part; I find that system to be one of innumerable millions, scattered over the immeasurable regions of space. My heart, my poor heart, misgives me! I fear that I am lost amidst these myriads of beings — that it is not possible for such a poor worm as I am to be remembered by the Lord of all! But “*the word of our God shall stand for ever.*” That word declares “the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry.” While he made the universe, and governs it too, he is not unmindful of the work of his hands. “Not a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice.” “The very hairs of my head are all numbered.”

I perceive that life’s day is rapidly hastening to a close. “The place that knows me now, will shortly know me no more.” I feel that I have an intelligent thinking spirit within me; but whether it will return to the dust when my body dies, my reason cannot tell. But “*the word of our God shall stand for ever.*” That word assures me that the souls of Abraham and Lazarus are in the abodes of the faithful; that the souls of the faithful shall live for ever.

I am going down to the dust! O king of terrors, I am not insensible of thy approach! The gloomy terrors of the grave are before me! I must go down to “the house appointed for all living!” But let me not be dismayed; the word of God assures me, — and “*the word of our God shall stand for ever,*” — that all who are in the graves shall live again. “The hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth!” “Them that sleep with Jesus will God bring with him.” And in the day when God shall come in glory, “he shall change my vile body, and fashion it like unto his own glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.”



O, I am glad that "*the word of our God shall stand for ever.*" I feel that I have been a sinner! The proudest infidel feels it. *He* felt it, who said, "I hate every body; I believe myself to be about the best of men; and I know how bad I am!" Yes; and as a Christian, with clearer light, I know that I have been a sinner. Yet let me not sink into despair! Let me not abandon myself to hopeless wretchedness! The word of God assures me,—and "*the word of our God shall stand for ever,*" — "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." "Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man;" "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

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## SERMON XXII.

THE TRANSLATION OF ELIJAH COMPARED WITH THE  
DEATH-BED OF ELISHA.

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BY REV. HENRY MELVILL, D. D.  
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"Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash, the king of Israel, came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." — 2 KINGS xiii. 14.

ELISHA, as you will remember, succeeded Elijah in the prophetic office, having been with him at the moment of his being taken up into heaven, and having caught the mantle which fell from him, as he thus ascended unto God. Elijah and Elisha were both conspicuous by the power of working miracles, and by their efforts at withstanding idolatry and restoring throughout Israel the pure worship of God. It may not be altogether our part to institute a comparison between men so eminently endowed, or to pronounce as to one being more illustrious than the other; yet there is more recorded of Elisha than of Elijah. It would appear from the history of Elisha, that he wrought twice as many miracles as Elijah; as though the parting request had been literally complied with, and a double portion of the spirit of the ascending prophet had fallen on his successor. Neither is there anything related of Elisha, in which he would seem to have been blameworthy; and this

is more than can be said of Elijah ; for it would certainly seem that Elijah, after the memorable defeat of the prophets of Baal, abandoned his post upon a sudden fit of despondency, fleeing into the wilderness to avoid the threatened vengeance of Jezebel ; when, by remaining to follow up the impression which had been made, he might have succeeded, to a great degree, in reclaiming the people of Israel from their apostasy. We have before had occasion to show you that the manifestation upon Horeb, when the Lord was not found in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire, but discovered himself in and through the "still small voice," appears to have been intended as a sort of parable ; the truths conveyed being such as were fitted to encourage the prophet to perseverance in the course which he had taken, and to admonish him of punishment, if he acted differently in his office. There is nothing of a like kind recorded of Elisha. Doubtless he too had infirmities, and fell into sins ; for you cannot need proof that a man is not to be accounted faultless, because only his excellencies are told us in the Bible. But, so far as the scriptural account goes, it would be difficult to conceal that Elisha came nearer perfection than Elijah ; that not only was he more distinguished for the number of his miracles, but that he made greater progress in the unreserved consecration of himself to God. There is, moreover, reason for thinking that Elisha was more successful than Elijah had been in reclaiming the Israelites from the worship of Baal. You will recollect that in his fit of despondency, Elijah had complained that he stood quite alone, that there was none but himself to take the side of the Lord. He was utterly wrong in this opinion ; for God said, " Yet have I left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." But seven thousand was a very small remnant ; idolatry must still have had a vast preponderance on its side, if seven thousand were all the worshippers of Jehovah. But you find that when Jehu, who was raised up twelve years after, proceeded by a sort of plot to the destroying the idolaters among his people, he was able to entice them into one house or temple ; so that their number must have differed greatly from what it had been a few years before. We know, also, that Elisha continued his labors for at least forty-five years after the beginning of the reign of Jehu ; and though his name is never once mentioned throughout this long period, we may justly suppose that he was as zealous as before, and perhaps not less successful, in turning away his countrymen from idolatry. He did not, indeed, prevail to the reclaiming their hearts as a nation unto the Lord, from whom they had revolted ; but he would seem to have been far more instrumental than Elijah to the conversion of individuals. God se

honored his protracted labors, that multitudes far outnumbering, in all probability, the seven thousand in the days of Elijah, were either secretly or openly in the ranks of those who preferred Jehovah to Baal. And thus eminent as were both these servants of the Lord, it were almost difficult not to regard Elisha as the more eminent of the two, and the more likely to have been singled out for special marks of the favor of Heaven. Let us put it to you to decide, from what is related of the two, which might be the more expected to receive at God's hands extraordinary tokens of acceptance; and it is only supposing that you will decide by the common rules which must regulate human judgments, if, considering the superior number of recorded miracles, and that also of reclaimed idolaters, we conclude, that you will look to find in the history of Elisha, rather than in that of Elijah, especial evidence that the prophet had found acceptance in the eyes of the Lord.

But now let us pass from our own conjectures or suppositions, to the actual facts in the case. We have two very different scenes to bring before you. We take you first to the brink of the Jordan, where there is about to occur one of the most marvellous events that ever befel a being of our race. There are two prophets conversing together on the bank of the river. Suddenly, whilst they are yet talking, lo! a chariot of fire, drawn by horses of fire, descends from heaven — equipage such as, perhaps, mortal eye had never gazed upon before; a scene too strangely spiritual for mortal mind to contemplate. Yet it is for a man, for one of those two seers, that this celestial equipage is sent, that comes down in its awful effulgence to convey to the upper world, without allowing him to pass through the scene of death, the elder of the prophets on whom we have gazed. Oh, wondrously favored man! He is not, indeed, the first to whom has been awarded exemption from the sentence provoked by disobedience. In an earlier dispensation, Enoch was translated so as not to see death; although we know not if it were under the same circumstances of visible pomp, that this seventh from Adam exchanged earth for heaven. But if the prophet did not first receive this extraordinary distinction, it is difficult to imagine how one of our race could have been signally honored. We must return from the sight penetrated with amazement, and ready with our acknowledgment, that God hath given him such a token of his favor and acceptance, as — with reverence be it said — even God himself might hardly surpass.

But now we take you to a wholly different scene. An emaciated old man is before us, stretched on his bed, patiently awaiting death, which, to judge from the too evident signs of age and infirmity, cannot be far distant. There are no indications here of the equipage of flame;

though something of unearthly fire lights up the old man's eye, as he is led to predict his country's victory over the Assyrians. It is the prophet on whom fell the mantle of the ascending seer, who lies before us in all the feebleness of approaching dissolution. Years after years have passed, since that wondrous event at the brink of the Jordan; and now he who was appointed in the stead of him who went up in the chariot of fire, is about to follow him to the invisible world, that he, too, may rest from his toils. But what a difference is there in the manner and circumstances of the departure! Is it possible even to imagine a greater contrast? In the one case, there is a suspension of all the ordinary laws. There is no death, no wasting and wearing down of the faculties; in a moment, and with the utmost splendor of miracle, the servant of the Lord passes, body and soul, into heavenly places, as though he had not been a child of Adam, or as though Adam had not tasted of the fatal fruit. In the other case, not only are the ordinary laws not suspended, they seem to be carried into force with every distressing accompaniment. There is continued and pining sickness; there is the gradual decay of strength; there is that hard and heavy lot, when "the earthly house of this tabernacle" is taken down bit by bit, and the most patient are sorely exercised by the slowness of the process. Ah! what a contrast between the chariot of fire, and the decrepitude of old age; between the horses of fire, and the pains of corroding disease. And which, then, is the prophet who ascended so marvellously to heaven, and which the prophet who was to go hence with so lingering a step? You have already looked at the recorded actions of the two, and, feeling that Elisha seems to have exceeded Elijah in the wonders which he wrought, and the converts which he made, you expect that if God have a signal mark of favor to bestow, it will be given to him who seems to have done the most to advance the cause of truth. In other words, had we merely given you the registered actions of the two, and then placed before you, without naming the parties, the two departures into the invisible world, and asked you to tell us which you should conclude to be that of Elijah, and which that of Elisha, there is not, perhaps, one of you who would have assigned to Elijah the equipage of flame, and to Elisha the slow process of decay. Whereas, such poor judges are men of the designs and dealings of God, that it was for Elijah that the chariot of fire and the horses of fire swept down from the firmament, and it is of Elisha that it is said, in the touching language of the text, that he was "fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died."

Now we do not mean, by thus comparing the recorded action of Elijah and Elisha, to decide that the one prophet was more excellent



than the other ; and far less do we mean, by comparing the circumstances of their departure out of life, to intimate that God's dealings with these his servants were not in accordance with their several characters. We are speaking only of what may be called the appearances of the case, and of the conclusions at which, arguing merely from those appearances, we should be likely to arrive. And certainly we hardly know a more remarkable contrast, nor one more fitted to engage a thoughtful mind, than that between the translation of Elijah, and the sickness of Elisha. Though there is not much told us of the sickness of Elisha, you can hardly fail to infer, from the language of our text, that it was a lingering sickness. "Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died." Evidently he did not die suddenly. He was visited on his sick bed by Joash, the king of Israel, and we have no reason to suppose that Joash was a man likely to be forward in showing respect for the servant of God. And it strikes us as a pathetic circumstance, so far as Elisha himself was concerned, that Joash, in visiting the dying prophet, addressed him with the words, "O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." For these were the very words which Elisha had uttered, when Elijah was parted from him, and went up in a whirlwind into heaven. "Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." Now must not this quotation of his own words have most powerfully reminded Elisha of the translation of Elijah, fixing on him the remembrance of the occasion on which they had been used by himself, and suggesting the difference between it and the occasion on which they were now being used to himself? There is no reason to suppose that Joash purposely used the same words ; for the expression may have been a proverbial one, and frequently employed on the occasion of the falling of a great leader. But as Elisha lay there in his old age, and a king bent over him and breathed the words, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof," it would indeed be difficult to believe that the mind of the dying prophet did not recall the wondrous scene on the brink of the Jordan, that there did not pass before him the chariot of fire and the horses of fire, and that he did not for a moment, though not in a complaining, yet in an inquiring spirit, revolve the difference between Elijah's departure and his own. And, whatever may have been the feelings of Elisha himself, there is, as we have said, much to think of, and much to learn, if we simply set before us Elijah and Elisha as at least equally eminent in the service of God, and then behold the one translated without seeing death, whilst the other is left to all the lingering processes of old age and decay. It is a sort of contrast which is still often seen, if not

definitely traced, yet sufficiently marked to attract attention and to excite wonder. For there is a vast apparent difference between God's dealings with his servants, with those who, according to their opportunities, seem to be equally earnest in the great duties of obedience and faith. You shall observe that one is suddenly arrested in the midst of a high career of usefulness; that, without being worn out by age, or worn down by protracted disease, he is quickly, and with every demonstration of victory and of triumph, borne away from the earth to the presence of God. So visibly, we might almost say, does the Christian pass into the heavenly abode, that you can only liken the removal to that of Elijah, and survivors will speak of the chariot of fire and the horses of fire, as though, in burning pomp, the equipage had been seen in the chamber of sickness. But you shall observe that another, eminent also as a servant of God, is left to become infirm and decrepit, to be broken up gradually through the inroads of age, or consumed by pining sickness, so that for months, and perhaps even years, he is confined to his room, and incapacitated for every kind of active employment. And friends cannot here speak of the translation of Elijah. There is nothing in the circumstances of this slow and toilsome departure, which can be brought into the remotest comparison with the rapture of him who went up in the whirlwind. The original sentence has here taken effect in all its severity, so far as the body is concerned, and though bright thoughts may be shedding themselves through the mind, and the failing spirit sustain itself with a hope which is "full of immortality," the taking down of "the earthly house of this tabernacle" is but the continued and mournful exhibition of the humiliating truth, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." Yes, but because this case of departure out of life is so widely different from the former, is there anything to wonder at, much more is there anything to murmur at? Are we to infer, are we for a moment to suspect, that he who is left to linger, must be less prepared to die or less approved of God, than one who goes hence as though borne upon angels' wings? Nay, this were indeed an unwarranted inference or an injurious suspicion. Who will presume to think that Elisha was less righteous than Elijah, that he had been less obedient to God, or had done less in his service? Scripture, as we have seen, seems carefully to set itself against any such opinion, by enumerating more of the actions and successes of Elisha than of Elijah; and yet Elisha died the lingering death, while Elijah left the earth in the chariot of fire. Blessed be God that both cases are recorded. I can now go to the sick room, where a Christian, on whom the summons of departure hence has come unexpectedly, whilst yet he was pursuing a course of undiminished usefulness, is visibly

trampling upon death, and to whose eyes it may be said that heaven is already opened, in such vigor is that faith which is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." I can tell friends and relatives that mourning should be lost in thankfulness. Does not the departure of Elisha remind them of the rapture of Elijah; and would they shed tears over the chariot of fire? But I can pass then to another sick room, where an aged Christian is lingering weariedly through days of pain and nights of watching. Oh! what a contrast is here. There is, perhaps, dejection. It is a sore exercise of patience, both to the sufferer himself, and to those who are ministering to him, that his removal from amongst the living is by a slow process; and perhaps the feeling is, that he cannot be ready for his removal, that notwithstanding his long life of piety, corruption must have had a more than commonly strong hold upon him, else would there never have been so protracted a dismissal. He possibly knows that I have just left the chamber where death is experiencing so signal a defeat, and it does but give him a melancholy view of his own case, that it should thus be forced into contrast with one so glorious and triumphant. "Ay," he will say, "you do not find here the chariot of fire and the horses of fire. You have been with Elijah on the border of Jordan, but there is no Elijah here, no saint so ripe for immortality, that angels stand ready with expanded wings to bear him to the mansions above. Alas! for the depraved heart which takes so much longer in being purified. Alas! for that desperate sinfulness which is not to be eradicated, but by extraordinary and lingering corrections." "Nay, my brother," is the fitting reply, "write not bitter things against thyself, as if protracted sickness and debility were necessarily any evidence of an unfitness to die, or of a more than common share of evil to be mastered within. True, I have just left the river's brink on which Elijah stands, but I have come to the bed on which Elisha lies, and Scripture draws no injurious comparison between Elijah and Elisha. If it furnish material for a comparison at all, the preference seems to lie with the prophet who lingered on the bed, and not with him who went up in the whirlwind. Then be of good cheer. The old infirm man who is left till he might almost think himself forgotten, may be as dear to God, ay, and as fit for his presence, as the younger who seems about to step visibly into the chariot of fire. The flaming equipage came down for Elijah; Elisha remained to be worn away by toil. "Then he fell sick of the sickness whereof he died;" but the same words, and with the same truth, attended each prophet on his departing from the earth, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." Now there is one point involved in these general statements, on which



we would speak to you with somewhat greater distinctness. It seems often, as we have hinted, to excite surprise, both in the sufferer himself and in others, when a Christian who has long been eminent for piety, and whose faith has been conspicuous in his works, lingers for months, perhaps even years, in wearisome sickness, as though, notwithstanding the preparations of a righteous life, he needed protracted trial to fit him for the presence of God. The secret supposition is, that a Christian ought to die as soon as he is quite ready to die, and that, consequently, if there be lengthened sickness, so that a man dies by inches, it must be inferred that he requires a more than ordinary discipline, corruption having been stronger in him than in most, and therefore not to be subdued, but by processes more than usually protracted and severe. But, now, what is precisely meant by a Christian being ready to die? Is it merely meant that he is in such a state that, were he to die, he would go to heaven? Then, surely, he must be in that state, in the majority of cases, long before he actually dies. At least, there must be as good reason for believing him in that state long before death, as at the moment of death; whenever death comes to a sincere believer in Christ, if it surprise him not in unrepented sin, we have the same reason for a meek though a confident hope that he had been removed home to that "rest which remaineth for the people of God." And, as to looking on long sickness as that which is gradually to purify the soul, the dismissal of that soul from the body being deferred till a certain point of purification has been reached, and taking place immediately on that point being gained, why this is really little better than the Papal doctrine of purgatory, only that the Protestant puts it before death, and the Romanist after. No doubt sickness, like any other trial, is instrumental, under God, to the ends of moral discipline, to the exercising and perfecting of the various graces of the Christian. But am I to suppose that the Christian who is confined for weeks or months to his bed or his room, would not have gone to heaven had he died without this tedious suffering; that this tedious suffering is appointed him, because there is so much of which to cleanse and disburden his conscience, so much more than in numbers who pass without such sore trial into the invisible world? God forbid that we should maintain a supposition so unjustifiable and so uncharitable. Shall I presume to think that Elisha was not fit to die when Elijah was translated, or that the "sickness whereof he died," was appointed him as necessary to his being fitted for death? Not so. There is, we believe, altogether a mistake in the view commonly taken of old age and lingering illness. Because a man is confined to his room or his bed, the idea seems to be that he is altogether useless; that, in the ordinary phrase, he is quite



laid by, as though he had no duties to perform, when he could no longer perform those of more active life. Was there ever a greater mistake? The sick room, the sick bed, has its special, its appropriate duties, duties to the full as difficult, as honorable, as remunerating, as any which devolve upon the Christian whilst yet in his unbroken strength. They are not precisely the same duties as belong to the man in health; but they differ only by such degrees as change of circumstances and condition will always produce. The patience which he has to cultivate, the resignation which he has to exhibit, the faith which he has to exercise, the example which he has to set, — Oh! talk not of a sick man as a man laid by. Harder deeds, ay, and it may be deeds of more extensive usefulness, are required from him who lingers on the couch, than from many a leader in the highest and the most laborious of Christian undertakings. Is there any cause for surprise, if the Christian be left to linger long in sickness, to wear away tedious months in racking pain or slow decay? Nay, as good cause would there be for surprise, that a Christian were not sooner removed from active duties, that strength is continued to him year after year, for the particular work assigned him by God. Why should it be more surprising that God keeps one man for a long time to the duties of the sick room, than that he keeps another man for a long time to the duties of public life? Each class of duties contributes to the glory of God and the welfare of man; to each class is annexed high recompense, and to each appertains no ordinary usefulness. Our portion in eternity will be determined by the progress here made in holiness; and is not sickness, by the peculiar nature of its duties, even more fitted than health for maturing us in holiness? Shall we, then, wonder if one whom God loves linger long in sickness, when every moment this sickness may be fitting him for a brighter crown above? I do not speak of mere fitness to enter heaven. Heaven presents variety of portion, as “one star differeth from another star in glory;” and if superior holiness prepare for superior blessedness, why think it stranger that God should leave one of his servants to grow holier in sickness, than that he should leave another to grow holier in health, which, of the two, is generally less congenial with inward piety and devotedness. Besides, it is they who “turn many to righteousness,” that are to “shine as the stars of the firmament.” And is there no sermon from a sick bed? Has the sick man nothing to do with publishing and adorning the gospel? Nay, I think that an awful, a perilous trust, is committed to the sick Christian. Friends, children, neighbors, the Church at large, look to him for some practical exhibition of the worth of Christianity. If he be fretful, or irritable, or full of doubts and fears, they will say, “Is this all that the

gospel can do for man in a season of extremity?" If, on the other hand, he be meek and resigned, and able to testify to God's faithfulness to his word, they will be taught, and nothing teaches like example, that Christianity can make good its pretensions, that it is a sustaining, elevating, death-conquering religion. And who shall calculate what may be wrought through such practical exhibitions of the power and the preciousness of the gospel? I, for one, will not dare to affirm that more is done towards converting the careless, confirming the wavering, or comforting the dying, by the bold champion who labors publicly at making known Christianity, than by the worn down invalid, who preaches to a household or a neighborhood by unruffled patience, and simple, unquestioning dependence upon God. I, for one, can believe that he who dies a death of triumph, passing almost visibly, whilst yet in the exercise of every energy, from a high post of usefulness into the kingdom of glory, may have fewer at the judgment to witness to the success of his labors, than many a bed-ridden Christian, who is waiting year after year, in the beautiful quietness of a godly submission, his summons to depart. I know not that the brilliant translation of Elijah did as much for Israel as the lingering dissolution of Elisha. It was from the-sick bed, and not from the chariot of fire, that there went forth "the arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Assyria." At all events, God made use of both these servants, made use of them, we mean, in the very act of their departure from life, so that nothing is to be inferred from the difference in the departure, but a difference in the Divine purpose, and not a difference in the Divine favor. Elijah was translated, we may believe, not merely, nor even mainly, as a mark of God's preference of himself, but to give a signal evidence of the truths of resurrection and immortality, and thus to deliver to his nation, as well as to the world, instruction upon points but dimly known, though of the highest possible importance and interest. And Elisha was left, we may venture to assume, not because he was unworthy of so glorious and triumphant a removal, and required for his own preparation the processes of more lengthened trial, but because his remaining might be instrumental to the turning numbers from idolatry, and even old age and sickness might be employed in services acceptable to God; ay, services, it may be, which shall be recompensed by a yet brighter glory in the invisible world than had been attained by the prophet who went away so gloriously in the chariot of fire. Thus Elijah did God's work in disappearing, and Elisha in remaining; the one by mounting in the whirlwind, the other by lingering on the bed, and sinking slowly into the grave. And it is the same still. God has particular lessons to give, and particular ends to answer, when he

calls away one of his servants in the midst of his strength and with every indication of triumph, and when he leaves another, not even to be employed in laborious exertion, but to spend months, and even years, in the silence of his chamber and in the solitariness of his couch. Dismiss, then, the thought that there is anything strange in the lingering sickness and the long delayed deaths of Christians who have given full evidence of their faith and their piety. They are ready, they are fit to die, if by readiness, if by fitness, we mean such a spiritual state that hope might justly plant itself by their grave, and smile beautifully as they were committed to its cold embrace. But God has still work for them to do, and heaven has still prizes for them to win. Therefore do they live; therefore is the lamp so long in going out. They live that they may preach, they live that they may practice, Christianity. The lamp yet burns, that the flickering light may guide some wandering or wavering spirit, and add another sparkle to the crown of righteousness which shall be awarded at the judgment. Oh! then marvel not that death comes so slowly. The mercy is, that it comes not more quickly. And whensoever Elisha, the old and worn down man, "falls sick of the sickness whereof he must die," in place of looking on him as he lingers as on one who can be of no further use, rather regard him as still an efficient laborer in the highest of causes, and breathe over him such words as were breathed by Joash, king of Israel; words expressive of the blank which his departure must leave — "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof."

And yet, perhaps, — this is the last thing I have to say — you still feel as though it were upon Elijah that the great honor was put. He may seem to you to have obtained the better portion of the two. You contrast the bed of languishing with the chariot of fire, and you cannot hesitate as to which were the preferable lot. Well, it has not been the object of our discourse to make you think the departure of Elijah less glorious, but that of Elisha glorious also, because also useful. There was a greater brilliancy about that witness to the truth of a resurrection, which Elijah was removed that he might give, than about that conversion of numbers from idolatry, which Elisha remained that he might effect. And, in like manner, that at the least as much of usefulness appertains to the lingering old age and the sickness of one Christian as to the earlier and more triumphant death of another — this may be proved, without your feeling satisfied that the diversity of God's dealings should not be taken in evidence of some diversity in his favor. Now we might safely refer to another life, to the decisions and allotments of another state of being, for full proof that God may as graciously approve, and design as gloriously to recompense, the patience of the



sufferer on his sick bed, as the boldness of the martyr at the stake. But even in this life he will often provide that they who serve him through solitary watching and meek endurance, should share his honors with those whose virtues have been more conspicuous, and whose actions more brilliant. Seems it to you to have been so glorious a thing to have witnessed, as Elijah witnessed, to the truth of a resurrection; and would you not have wondered, had Elisha, as he lingered on his bed, sighed for the privilege of giving a like testimony to so stupendous a fact? After all, then, which of the two was most honored as a witness to the resurrection, Elijah, who departed in the whirlwind, or Elisha, who went down into the grave? Know ye not what narrative follows immediately on that of the sickness and death of Elisha — *immediately*, as though God would prevent the suspicion that he had put an honor on one servant which he had denied to another? It is this: — “And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year. And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.” Nay, sirs, was there more glori-ousness in the chariot of fire than in this? Was it a more wondrous thing not to die, than, when dead, to give life? Was it a greater proof of God’s approval, to escape the grave, than to defeat it whilst lying in it? Was there a stronger attestation to the truth of a resurrection when a living man sprang from the earth, showing that body as well as soul can ascend up on high, than when a dead man took off the grave clothes, and returned to his fellow men — an evidence that a prophet greater than Elijah or Elisha would yet lie among the buried, but only to despoil the sepulchres of their prey? It might almost be said, that God showed himself jealous for the honor of his servant Elisha, and put him, as it were, on a par with Elijah, by giving him, if not miraculous departure out of life, yet miraculous energy after death. If it were as a type of the ascending Christ, that Elijah went up to heaven, surely it was a type of Christ “through death destroying him that had the power of death,” that the bones of Elisha communicated life. And God still often effects something similar in regard to his servants. The aged believer, whose closing scene has been regarded as furnishing only material of melancholy contrast, whether with his own more active days, or with the more rapid and joyful transition of his own brethren in the flesh, so debilitated has he been by long sickness, — “My heart is smitten and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread,” — often wins after death a testimony to his usefulness



which may well compensate for the darkness which seemed to hang over his decline. The good deeds wrought by him in his protracted illness, may not immediately appear; but afterwards we learn that he did not linger in vain, that he did not die in vain. The example is remembered, the patience, the meekness, — remembered by children, by servants, by friends, by neighbors. It is remembered, to be imitated in their own day of sorrow, their own hour of dissolution. Then it administers courage, constancy, hope; and what is this, but the bones of Elisha communicating life? Oh! we may not look with Elijah to escape death; but we may look with Elisha to work wonders after death. We may suffer much, we may linger long, — no burning rapture may characterize our going hence; but if there be patient submission to the will of the Lord, our memory may survive, and be instrumental to the victories of religion. Oh! who would complain at not being borne away in the fire of heaven, if, whilst in dust, he should turn others from the fire of hell?

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## SERMON XXIII.

THE HAPPY MAN A RELIGIOUS MAN.

BY REV ROBERT NEWTON, D. D.

“Happy is that people, that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord.” — PSALM cxliv. 15.

MAN is obviously formed for happiness. Indeed this is matter of consciousness to all; we all feel that it is as natural for us to desire to be happy as it is for us to breathe. This is nature’s first and last wish; and the desire of happiness forms not noly one of the earliest, but one of the most powerful principles of our nature.

But although happiness is earnestly desired, and although, in one way or other, happiness is universally pursued, the melancholy fact is, after all, that it is but very partially enjoyed. *Unhappy man* has long since become a general designation for our species. And we are not surprised at this, when we recollect that very many of our race, after devoting many a long year of fruitless toil and labor to the search for happiness, have all but arrived at the conclusion, (if they have

not actually arrived there,) that its attainment is impossible — that all that they have heard and read concerning it, is deceptive and unreal — and that, in point of fact, there is no such thing to be attained or enjoyed by man in this desert world.

What, then, my dear friends, is to be done? Are we to sit down in despondency? and are we, very soon after that, to abandon ourselves to despair? and, sitting side by side, are we to heave sigh for sigh, to shed tear for tear, and, looking on one another through the medium of those tears, are we to say, Alas! there is no happiness? Can we suppose that the wise and benevolent author of our existence has made us capable of that which he has determined we shall not enjoy? Can we suppose that he, that is the former of us all, has implanted in our bosoms the desire of happiness — created there the intense thirst after happiness — whilst he has placed the satiating stream yonder far beyond our reach? It cannot be. Heaven never had created but to bless. What other motive could possibly have induced the Divine Being to give existence to the human being, but that of diffusing happiness — making his creature, man, happy?

And man was happy when God made him; but then he was happy in his God, and he was to be happy in nothing contrary to God, and in nothing without God. And while man remained with God, his happiness remained with him; but when by transgression he fell from God, he lost his happiness. And now man is unhappy, because he is guilty; he is unhappy, because he is unholy; he is unhappy, because he is unlike God. He wants to be happy independently. He feels painfully that he has lost his happiness, but then he knows very well that he has not lost the capacity for enjoyment; and he feels — strongly feels — he has not lost the desire after it, but then he seeks it any where — every where — except where alone he can find it. He “spends his money for that which is not bread, his labor for that which satisfieth not.” He seeks happiness in very vanity, he seeks happiness in folly, he seeks happiness in sin. But instead of rest and peace, he finds toil and labor; instead of happiness and repose, he finds vanity and vexation of spirit.

When abandoning all these earthly cisterns (which are all “broken cisterns, and which contain no water — not a drop of real happiness for the spiritual immortal mind of man,) man betakes himself to God in Christ as his only refuge, and seeks to be accepted of God in Christ, and the Lord becomes his God, *then* he finds the happiness which he sought in vain elsewhere. Then he comes to the fountain of living water; and then he drinks and is satisfied. Then he can subscribe to the doctrine which my text contains, “Happy is that people, that is in

such a case; yea, happy," beyond all compare, "is that people, whose God is the Lord."

Now that is our God, to which we are principally devoted; that is our God which has the first place in our thoughts, and which has the highest place in our affections: that is our God, to which we bow down, to which we continually pay our devotion — whatever it may be; it may be some idol. Now to have Jehovah for our God is to have our thoughts first of all occupied with him — to have our affections supremely placed on him — to be reconciled to him — to be accepted of him through Jesus Christ — to know him, and to love him, and to live devoted to him. And my text declares, that all such persons are really and pre-eminently happy.

Now one would suppose that a discourse on the subject of happiness must be interesting to all, because all are in search of it. One would suppose that such a discourse must be interesting to young people; I see a great number of young people (and with very great pleasure) in this assembly, and I know my young friends are all intensely desirous to obtain happiness. Let me, then, try, in dependence on Divine aid, to show you where it is to be found, and to show you the nature and the excellence of "the people whose God is the Lord;" and having done this, let me endeavor to state, and to lay prostrate some of those objections, which are sometimes urged against the doctrine which my text contains.

#### I. THE NATURE AND EXCELLENCE OF "THE PEOPLE WHOSE GOD IS THE LORD." They are "*happy*."

And what is happiness? It is enjoyment, it is satisfaction, it is delight. And, for any thing I know to the contrary, the different beings that inhabit this earth are obliged, by their own nature, to seek for enjoyment, to seek for a bliss suited to their nature; and for anything I know, they are happy, just in proportion as they are in their proper element, and as they possess and enjoy what may be called their *chief good*; they have an enjoyment according to their nature and capacity.

And, my dear friends, is it not in this way that we are to ascertain how man becomes happy? Surely, he cannot be happy till he lives in his proper element; he cannot be happy till he finds and enjoys his chief good. And need I tell my friends where that is, and what that is? Is it not he, who is the father of the human spirit — the centre and the rest of the soul of man? Did He not form our spirits for Himself? And is it not there alone that we find our proper element — the element of the soul, for which it was originally formed? And is it not there — in the enjoyment of God — that we

find our chief good? There, and there alone we find a portion, suited to our nature and equal to our capacities, commensurate with all our wishes, and lasting as our being.

1. This happiness, however, is all aggregate. There are various ingredients in the happiness of this people, "the people whose God is the Lord." At present I will select three of these ingredients.

And I begin by remarking, that "the people whose God is the Lord," are happy inasmuch as they enjoy the peace of God. I name this in the first instance, because I believe it is the lowest grade of all true religious happiness. It *begins here*.

That "there is no peace to the wicked," is a fact — a truth which reason suggests, a truth which revelation asserts, a truth which experience awfully demonstrates. An old Pagan could stumble upon this truth — "No wicked man is happy." And no wicked man, as such, *can be* happy, because every thing is out of course; all is in a state of moral derangement, disorder and chaos, and, therefore, there can be no real enjoyment. What are the wicked like? The prophet tells you what. I was thinking the other night when on the ocean, and when the raging billows dashed against the vessel — I thought of the language of the prophet, "The wicked is like the troubled sea" — not the sea when it is calm, and serene, and placid, but the ocean when tempest-tossed, one angry wave succeeding another. That is the emblem of a wicked mind, the emblem of an unsanctified heart — all agitation, commotion, and disorder. "There is no peace" — there can be none — "to the wicked."

Now, this is clearly seen by the enlightened mind, and this is deeply felt by the enlightened conscience. There is not only the perception of what is really the bane of happiness — sin, guilt, depravity; but there is the painful feeling, too, so that, while we see our sin, we feel its curse — what "an evil and a bitter thing" it is, to sin against God. The arrow of truth thus penetrates the heart and conscience of the awakened sinner, and he feels the poignant smart, writhes under an agonized conscience, and asks, Where shall my agonized conscience find rest; I am vile; I deserve to perish; I am undone, unless divine mercy interpose: myself I cannot save; an angel's arm cannot rescue me from impending ruin; I cannot extract this dart; I cannot heal the wound, I cannot atone for a single sin, I cannot wash out any moral stain; what shall I do? The gospel tells you what to do: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." That is the simple, direct, and safe answer given to the inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" Whoever you may be, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." That is the Scripture



way of salvation. Come, as a lost sinner, to Jesus Christ, as the only Savior, and venture thy soul on the sacrifice of Calvary; cast thyself upon that atonement which was made for the sin of a guilty world; believe on him,

" Who died, thy sin to atone,  
And lives, thy soul to save."

and lives to dispense the pardon he bought with his blood; and believing on him "with thy heart unto righteousness," thy guilt shall be removed, thy burden fall to the ground, thy chains be snapped asunder, and thou shalt enter into liberty, and light, and life.

And now the penitent believer in Jesus looks up, and that cloud that gathered blackness over him before, is dispersed, and his heaven-born soul drinks in the radiance of the Sun of righteousness. He looks up, and finds that "being justified by faith, he has peace with God" — oh! what happiness is this! — "peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." And this peace of God, he finds, "passeth all understanding, and it keeps his heart and mind in the knowledge and love of God, by Christ Jesus." What a change has now taken place! Conscience now smiles, and whispers peace. A divine peace — a holy, heavenly, serenity — is transfused through his very soul. And you must not go to the angry ocean, to see an emblem of him now; you must rather go yonder to the margin of some transparent lake, whose placid bosom reflects all the loveliness of surrounding nature — *there* is the sweet and delightful emblem of a heart filled with the peace of God. "Happy is the people that is in such a case."

Let me name another ingredient in this cup of bliss; "the people, whose God is the Lord," *are happy in the possession and enjoyment of the love of God*. Love is the master-passion of the soul; and it is of the essence of love, to give delight in proportion to the suitableness and excellence of its object. But we are not now speaking of a merely human passion, but we are speaking of a divine and gracious principle; we are speaking of the "love of God" (to use St. Paul's emphatic language,) "shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto us." And no sooner do we believe on Jesus Christ aright, but this "faith works by love." The love of God in Christ is revealed in our hearts; and it is that, so far as I understand it, so far as the Bible directs me on the subject — it is that love that kindles love in our hearts. Some mystical writers, some century since, said some very fine things on this subject; some theologians and some poets, said some very beautiful things upon the subject; they had an idea of loving God on account of his own supreme and excellent loveliness, and I remember one of them going so far as to say, that, were the writer

sent to the bad place, even from thence there must be love to a being infinitely amiable; and some modern writers, too, have said, that the human mind, fallen as it is, must admire what is supremely excellent, and fitting, and amiable, and be attracted by it. My dear friends, is it not, (think you,) the very best answer to this, that there is not a word of it, that I know of, in the Bible? — not one. All this might have done very well, for aught I know, for Adam and Eve in paradise, before sin was introduced, when their nature was immaculate, and all was right:

Pure was the body, and the soul serene;

And I dare say, those happy and pure intelligences around the throne can delight in that which is infinitely amiable, and lovely, and beautiful; and seraphs beholding the divine excellence and glory burn with intense ardor, and love, and devotion. Ah! but man is fallen. Account for it as you will, he is not the creature now he was when God created him. Some sad thing has happened to him; and the Bible tells me how, and I know no other way of accounting for it. And my conviction is, that there is too much blindness in the human will, and too much corruption and earthliness in the human heart, and too much frostiness (if I may be allowed the expression,) — too much frostiness and ice there, for that heart ever to rise in love to God, merely because he is infinitely lovely. Oh! if these hearts of ours ever rise in love to God, the God of Love must come down and touch these hearts of ours; his love, through Jesus, must be manifested to these hearts of ours, and we must have a vivid impression of it, and then will our love be lighted up in return; a spark from the fire of divine love must fall upon our hearts, and then will our love be kindled up in return, and we shall say, “We love him, because he first loved us.”

This divine love is completely satisfied with the suitability and the fulness of its object — the chief good, the supreme excellence, the blessed God; and the soul, in union with God, and in the exercise of this feeling, rises in emotions of desire, and in emotions of esteem, and in emotions of gratitude, and in emotions of holy complacency and delight. And there are moments, when “the people, whose God is the Lord,” in the exercise of the love of God, loving that God who has first loved them, can say, with the delighted and devout psalmist, “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth, that I desire besides thee.” But then, come not near, ye sensual and profane. These are delights to which you are strangers; this is a holy and divine love, which dwells not in your unhallowed breasts; it is sacred to “that people, whose God is the Lord.” What is it? it is the calm sunshine of the peaceful mind. What is it? it is an emana-

tion from paradise, beaming forth upon the heart of the believer. What is it? why, it is the very element of heaven realized on earth; for heaven is love. What is it? why, it is the transporting delight of angels; for the happiness of angels is the happiness of love, and what, can Gabriel more than love God and be happy? What is it? it is a beam of the eternal being. What is it? it is the very nature and image of God restored to the soul of man; for "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love" — mark you, that is his element, that is his habitation, that is the atmosphere he breathes — "he, that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." "Happy is the people, that is in such a case."

And then, if the impression be not always so vivid, and if the happiness rise not always so high, what then? why, let me say, that "the people, whose God is the Lord," *are always happy inasmuch as they always hope in God.* Hope! oh, what a thing is hope! Poets have descanted on the pleasures of hope; ah! but the hope of the Christian! that gives pleasure indeed; that produces happiness — a happiness, with which "a stranger intermeddleth not." Hope has something good to look at; its object must be good, or it is not hope; that which we do not regard as good, we cannot hope for — we may fear it, and dread it, but we cannot hope for it. Again, hope means desire — desire of that which is good; hope means expectation — we expect the good that we desire. And then this expectation, and this desire of good promote the most pleasurable and delightful emotions in the heart. Now "the people, whose God is the Lord," hope for the care and bounty of a good providence, while they are in this world. And, oh! what comfort this brings to the mind! what a defenceless, dependent creature is man! but then, to have a hope in providence, and to believe that there is a watchful eye always upon us, and a good hand with us for our good, and that "the very hairs of our head are all numbered," and that our heavenly Father knows what we need, and that he can take care for us, and provide for us — why, what comfort does this bring to the mind! And then, again, "the people, whose God is the Lord," hope for all the grace they want, to enable them to be what God commands them to be, and to do what God commands them to do, and to suffer what God commands them to endure; they hope for "grace to help in time of need;" they hope for grace to make them holy, as well as make them happy, and make them happy by making them holy; and they hope for grace to make them live well, and grace to make them die well; and God has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee." But, then, they look beyond this world of time and sense. *There* is the proper object of



hope, and there it sparkles through the sky—"glory, honor, and immortality," "eternal life," the heaven of God, all that heaven is, and all that heaven has to give. Why now, my dear friends, do you not see the men of this world, when they are hoping for something which they greatly desire, and when the way seems clear and impediments removed, and they expect very soon to realize all that which they desire and hope for—do you not see, that that emotion gives way to emotions little less than transport? and yet it is, perhaps, something perishable and something worthless. What, then, must be the hope of the Christian, who has "*Christ* formed in his heart, the hope of glory," who is hoping, not for an earthly crown, but for a celestial diadem, and who is hoping for a glorified body as well as a glorified soul, in a glorious heaven of joy for ever? Can it be, that the man who has this hope, can be a wretched man? I see not how it can be. Why, it must sweeten all the bitters of life; it must sustain the man under the pressure of afflictions and trials. Oh! yes, this hope administers a cordial in your troubles; this hope comes like an angel, and beckons you onward, and points you to the skies yonder; and you then take courage. The hope of the Christian unites and brings together the Christian's double heaven; for we must have a double heaven, or no heaven—heaven *here*, and heaven *there*—heaven on the way, and heaven at home—heaven in reserve, and heaven enjoyed.

2. Now, then, mark *the eminence* and *the excellence* of this happiness. "*Yea, happy;*" for the psalmist did not satisfy himself with simply stating the fact, that the people of God are happy—"happy is that people, that is in such a case"—but he repeats his words with stronger emphasis, "*Yea, happy is the people, whose God is the Lord.*"

Mark the eminence of this happiness, from the circumstance that *it is substantial in its nature*. It is not a mere phantom; it is not a name without a nature; it is not a sign without a thing to be signified thereby. Such, indeed, is all that this world calls bliss; that is a wild delirium, that is a delusive dream, that is a sort of phantom in yonder void, exhibiting itself under various colors and various forms of fascination, and the eager, infatuated votaries, run after it with all their might; and they see it dancing before them at some place of public amusement or public resort, and there they run with all possible eagerness, expecting to lay hold of it—but it eludes their grasp; and there, again, is another occasion, when it rises before them, and they think it looks more inviting than it ever did before, and they run after it with as much eagerness as if they had never been disappointed



before — again it eludes their grasp ; and again it appears, and away they go, in high expectation that they shall obtain it now, and they grasp the phantom — but they find it air. The bubble is no sooner touched than it dissolves ; and there is not a drop of happiness obtained. Ah ! ye worldlings, your own consciences bear me witness, that what I say is true. It is so, and it must be so, with what this world calls happiness ; and every thing, under the name of bliss, that is not consistent with truth, and with holiness, and with religion.

But then it is otherwise with religion. This is not a mere bubble, this is not a mere name ; this is no phantom ; it is a reality, it is substance. There is something here on which the mind of man can feed ; there is something here to sustain the soul, and nourish the soul, and support the soul. Oh ! yes, “ the favor of God is *life*, and his loving-kindness is better than life.” Why, that word does not mean mere existence ; for bad men exist, but then they have not the favor of God. Oh ! the favor of God means real enjoyment, means real happiness. To have the favor of him, and to look up to him, and enjoy his smile — what a happiness is this ! The good man has not to rove after happiness all over the world, like mere men of the world ; oh ! no, happiness resides in him ; there is “ a well of water ” opened there by the power of the Spirit of God, and it is “ springing up,” and, springing up “ to everlasting life.”

Then mark the eminence of this happiness, too, by the consideration of its transcendent degree. There is nothing else to compare to it in this way. If you could, in your own thoughts and imaginations, collect together all the meagre drops of what this world calls happiness, you would find, that all collected together, they are not worthy to be compared with the substantial bliss of “ the people, whose God is the Lord.” Now, try this for a moment.

What is, or can be, the happiness of those “ whose God is their belly ? ” I am afraid there are multitudes of men in this professedly Christian country, who worship at that shrine, and whose first consideration, on awaking in the morning, is, now what shall I contrive this day by which I shall get the highest enjoyment ? And then they call in art, and those who are supposed to have the most skill, and to dress up things in order to have a keener relish ; and “ what shall I eat ? and what shall I drink ? ” — is their first object day by day. Why, perhaps, that man’s four-footed brethren yonder, browsing on the herbage of the field — the simple, suitable food which nature has furnished for them, have a higher relish and a keener zest of the food which Providence has supplied to them, than that man has with all

his modifications of art. It humbles one in the dust to think one is of the same species with him.

What is, or can be, the happiness of that man whose god is his money? Ah! what worshippers have found this god — Mammon! Ah! and if we were all really ascertained in the light of truth, and in the light of God's truth, I am afraid that many more would belong to them than would be willing to be acknowledged as such. How many are there who have no idea of any happiness equal to that which results from increasing their worldly property — as though “a man's life consisted in the abundance of the things that he possesseth” — happiness in “adding house to house, and field to field” — happiness in loading themselves with thick clay — happiness derived from what? — why, from getting all they can, and keeping all they get. What do you call this man? why, he has a name in our language, which is scarcely English indeed, but I can give you the interpretation; we call him *miser*; and who does not know, that that, being interpreted, means *miserable*? And it is his proper name; he is a miserable man, wherever he exists.

Now what is, or can be, the happiness of the man whose god is honor? Ah! there are beings of another class, a different make of mind, who despise that low and creeping thing called *money*; “let those seek that that like it,” say they, “but give us honor, give us promotion, give us distinction.” They aspire after this, and they use at least all lawful, (would that none of them ever stepped over that line!) they use at least all lawful means to obtain this world's honor, and they imagine that that can give happiness to the mind. Why, my dear friends, I might go on with these remarks; I might go on to describe all those different classes of worshippers, “every one walking in the name of his god;” and I might show you, that instead of happiness, there is vanity and vexation; and that, let a man get as much as this world can give, in the midst of all the heart is not filled — “What, is this all I am to have? I thought I was to be happy, I thought I was to have real, solid bliss, but I find it to be all empty air!”

Oh! but look at the happiness of “the people, whose God is the Lord.” It is a happiness that comes from heaven; it is a happiness independent of all things earthly. If, indeed, Providence smiles, as the context describes, and good men have abundance of temporal prosperity, why, they know from whom they received it — they use it with temper and moderation — they pray for the sanctifying blessing of God upon that which they have — and they desire to do good with it. And, let me say, that real religion sanctifies what a man

possesses in this world — gives him a far higher enjoyment of it than the wicked can possibly have with all their unsanctified possessions. But then this is a bliss which depends not upon the smiles of mortals; this is within the reach of the poor man, as well as the rich man; this is within reach of the man in the mud-walled cottage, as well as in the most splendid mansion. Yes, for it comes from God; and God “will look to this man, that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at his Word.” And were we to examine every case, perhaps we should find a great deal more happiness in the humble walks of life — certainly we should where there is piety — than in the higher walks, where piety is not found. And then there is something in this that is so satisfactory, something that leaves no sting behind, something that will bear reflection, something that never palls upon the senses, something that makes us, the more we enjoy, the more we would enjoy — and the more we would enjoy, the more we may enjoy. Oh! how greatly does it transcend every thing of an earthly nature! Why did the clusters of the grapes of Canaan excel the onions and garlies of Egypt? not more than the happiness of religion excels all earthly bliss. Does the transparent stream excel the vile, stagnant pool? and does the rich and delicious kernel excel the hard and empty shell? not more than the happiness of God’s people excels all other kinds of enjoyment. And, finally, does the sun, in the zenith of his splendor, outshine the feeble glow worm? not more than the transcendent happiness of religion rises above all earthly happiness.

Mark, again, the eminence of this happiness by the consideration that *it is ever present in its fruition*. I remember the celebrated Hannah Moore, (who deserved well of her country, and whose works will live and be read while the English language is spoken or read,) in some of her valuable works has this remark — “This world’s happiness is always in the future tense.” True; it has no past tense, it has no present tense. The mere man of this world, who never had religion, cannot honestly say, “At such a time I *was* positively happy!” The man of the world, that knows nothing of religion, cannot now say, “I *am* happy!” Oh! no, it is always in the future tense; so that those two lines, that have been so often reprobated from the pulpit and the press, are true, after all, in the proper application of them —

“Hope springs eternal in the human breast;  
Man never *is*, but always *to be* blessed.”

“Always *to be* blest.” The man who thinks that the gratification of his palate will make him happy, if you go to him and ask, “when was it so?” “Oh! it is not what I have already received, but it is



something more exquisite that I expect ;” so that it is “ *to be.*” The man who looks to money to make him blest — why, now he told you, some years ago, that if he could but realize a certain sum, he would retire from the toils of his business or his profession, and go and live in the country, and be happy the rest of his days ; well, he has realized a much larger sum, and you go and ask him, “ are you happy ? ” ah ! the truth comes out again ; he tells you, a neighbor of his has been more successful than him, and realized almost twice as much as he has, and he will not be happy till he has as much ; so that it is always “ *to be.*” And then go again to the man who told you some time ago, that if he could but obtain this world’s honor, and especially if he could be ennobled — if he could get a title — it would be the consummation of his happiness ; well, this man actually succeeds ; he goes from one post to another, and pushes his way in society, till at last he obtains a title ; now you go to him — if you can get an introduction to him you go to him — and you address him by his title, and you say, “ My lord, you told me, at such a time, if you could but get a title, you should be happy ; and now you have got it, I am come on purpose to know whether it has made you happy ; ” ah ! he falters too, and he says, “ why, no, I cannot say I am happy at present ; for a neighbor of mine has a higher title, and another has a string of titles — and I cannot be happy till I rise as high as them ; ” so that you see again —

Man never *is*, but always *to be* blest.

But, thank God, it is not so with all. No, no ; the happiness of God’s people has a present tense, and a past, as well as a future. Oh ! yes, the text is in the present tense ; “ happy *is* the people that is in such a case : yea, happy ” — not shall be, or hope to be, but — “ happy is that people, whose God is the Lord.” Already does the favor of God beam upon their spirits, and diffuse essential joy through their souls. Already does “ the peace that passeth understanding,” overflow their bosoms. Already is “ the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, by the Holy Ghost given unto them.” Already they rejoice in the prospect of everlasting life.

And then let me say, too, that this happiness is purifying in its influence and tendency. Not so those things called bliss, which are inconsistent with religion and holiness. All unhallowed pleasures have a ruinous tendency ; they enervate the human intellect, they dim the eye of the understanding, they vitiate and deprave the heart ; they leave a deadly sting behind ; the cup may be painted and its contents may appear inviting, but, depend upon it, there is poison in the cup, if it be inconsistent with holiness. Oh ! but the pleasures of religion do not



contract the intellectual powers, they do not cloud the understanding, they do not deprave the heart. These pleasures are holy, and they tend to make us holy ; this happiness is spiritual, and it tends to make us spiritual. This happiness comes from God, and it leads to God.

And here let me say one word, my dear friends. Value this happiness, not merely for its own sake, because it is delightful to enjoy ; but value it because of its hallowing tendency and effect. All the pleasures that are to be found in religion are designed and calculated to make us more spiritual and heavenly, more dead to this world, and alive to that which is to come. See to it, then, that while you behold the glory of the Lord beaming from the face of the Redeemer, you catch the impression and are “ changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as the Spirit of the Lord.”

And then, here is another circumstance ; this pleasure — *this happiness* — *is unending* — an unending bliss. It not only is to continue with us, while we are in this world, but it is to go with us through the vale of death, and it is to be enjoyed and possessed by us for ever and ever. Now “ the pleasures of sin ” (make the most of them) are but “ for a season.” And that season, alas ! how short, and how uncertain ! Longer than this short life they cannot last ; up to its final close, they seldom, if ever, remain. Behold the man whom this world has called happy. Ah ! he called his wish, and it came ; and then he called another, and another, and they came, and he lived according to the sight of his eyes, and according to the desire of his heart, and he went on through scenes of sensuality for a few years ; but it is over now ; his poor body is wasted by excessive intemperance, he is dragging about with him an emaciated frame, and his angry conscience, like a spectre, meets him at every turn, and stares him in the face, and makes his guilty blood creep through his veins — while his irritated passions, which can no longer be gratified, gnaw his very soul. And is this the consummation of this world’s happiness ? “ Oh, my soul, come not thou into their secret ; ” with such men, “ mine honor, be not thou united.” But then the happiness of religion, being pure and undefiled, is “ incorruptible and fadeth not away.” Here is a happiness that goes with us through the varied scenes of life ; here is a happiness that the rough hand of death cannot strip us of. Death calls upon the man of this world to strip and die, and this world can take away what it gave ; but the world did not give the good man his happiness — it came from God ; and the world cannot take it away, and death cannot take it away. And it sometimes happens, that his happiness at that hour rises higher than ever. Oh ! the joy of the Christian is a joy which death increases, and eternity crowns. Then he will drink, and be satisfied ;

he will have access to rivers of pleasure at God's right hand for evermore, where there will be all sunshine, and no cloud or storm; where there will be a day that shall never be followed by a night, where the sun shall rise that shall never set, and where "the days of mourning shall be ended."

"O ye blest scenes of permanent delight,  
Full, above measure! lasting beyond bound!  
A *perpetuity* of bliss is bliss.  
Could you, so rich in rapture, fear an end,  
That ghastly thought would drink up all your joy,  
And quite unparadise the realms of light."

Why, the very thought would spread a gloom through the celestial mansions, and cover all heaven with sackcloth. But no; there is no end; there is no thought, there is no dread of an end. In short, *there* is futurity for ever future — life, happiness, heaven beginning still where computation ends.

II. What, then, are THE OBJECTIONS WHICH ARE URGED TO THE DOCTRINE, which my text contains, and which I have endeavored to state?

1. Why, some have said, in the first place, "We remember to have heard you, when you selected another text, insist upon it that a religious course begins with sorrow and grief and mourning; and we have heard you quote such texts as this: "Be afflicted, and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness;" where, then, is this happiness in religion, of which you speak?"

Why, my friends, that, in the commencement of a religious course, there must be a "sorrow after a godly sort," we not only admit, but for this we must strongly and strenuously contend; but it follows not from this, that a religious life is not a happy one. For, let me reply to this in the first place, that, even in this bruisedness of spirit, this contrition of heart, and these prayers and tears and supplications, there is a relief, there is a satisfaction, far exceeding anything that can be found in a course of sin and intemperance; why, there are tears that delight, there are sighs that waft to heaven; and Jesus Christ has said, "Blessed" — not wretched — "are they that mourn." There is a blessedness even in mourning! there is such a thing as "the joy of grief." And let me reply to this, secondly, by saying, that this penitent is not mourning and weeping because he has religion, but because he wants it; he does not mourn and weep because he finds the favor of God, but because he feels himself under the sentence of the law of God, and knows that the sentence must be averted; he does not mourn and weep because he loves God, but because he does not love God, and

cannot be happy till he does love him. And then let me reply to this, thirdly, by saying, Let this man continue to seek, and continue to ask, and continue to knock, and let him cry at mercy's door by faith and prayer; and, depend upon it, the door will be opened, and depend upon it, God, whom he seeks, will come to his soul, and he will turn his mourning into joy, and his midnight into day. The Lord will appoint to these mourners in Zion "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;" for "they that sow in tears shall reap in joy." So that we find it true, after all, "Happy is that people whose God is the Lord."

2. But then it is urged, again, from another quarter, "How can a religious life be a happy one, when you sometimes tell us of the restraints of religion, and of the arduous duties of religion; how, then, is happiness consistent with all this?"

Restraints of religion! austerities of religion! sacrifices of religion! Let me say to the mere man of this world, it is with an ill grace that *he* brings forward this objection; it is with an ill grace that *he* says a word upon the subject; why, who does not know what kind of life *he* is living — a life ten thousand times more severe? What mean all those sacrifices of time, and sacrifices of property, and sacrifices of health, he is making in the way of the god he serves? what mean all those days of hurry and confusion? ah! and what mean all those sleepless nights, not only of folly, but of dissipation? I say that it is with an ill grace that a man of the world, who is devoted to its follies and its vanities, says a word about the restraints of religion. But admitted religion *does* impose restraints upon man; but from what does it restrain him? — from sin. Its restraints are all salutary. It forbids nothing but what, if pursued, would be a curse to the man, and not a blessing. It forbids sin under all its forms and modifications, and religion does require that a man be "temperate in all things." And I put it to the good sense of this assembly, which has the most enjoyment — the man that eats and drinks till his very indulgences pall upon the sense, and fill him with disgust — or the man who "lets his moderation be known unto all men?" Common sense knows very well how to answer this question.

Admitted again — duties of religion, duties of piety, duties of justice, duties of charity. But then does it follow, that the people of God are not happy? Why, they have to read the Bible; does that make them unhappy? oh! how I "love thy law!" "it is sweeter to me than honey and the honey-comb;" is that the way a man is made unhappy — when he tastes the honey dropping from the comb? A good man has to pray to God; does that make him unhappy? Oh! prayer opens



heaven, and lets the stream of mercy down. A good man has to worship God with his family; and does that make him unhappy? What! when the God he loves smiles upon him, and the fire from above comes down to kindle the sacrifice? A good man has to reverence the Sabbath; does that make him unhappy? Oh! he counts "the Sabbath a delight, holy of the Lord and honorable." A good man has to go to the sanctuary; does that make him unhappy? "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth." A miserable infidel, with his book in his hand, sat opposite to me in Lincolnshire, the other day, and there he was reading a book, purporting to be written and published by a German, and he read some passages to this effect — that we English people are the most joyless, mopish people on earth, and that even the little birds we shut up in a dark room, lest they should profane the Sabbath by singing, and that we go to church, not once, but even twice, and many three times in the day, and make it a day of gloom and wretchedness. Why, I said, in the first place, it is not true; we do not shut little birds up, for fear they should profane the Sabbath by singing. In the second place, you and your author talk about things you do not know the nature of; it is true that we go to places of worship, but we do not go merely because it is our duty, but we go also because it is a pleasure and delight; and those very men that you and your author describe as gloomy and joyless — why they are the happiest men that breathe.

Duties of justice, too; and which is the happy man — he that always makes that golden rule of love the rule of his actions, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" — or he that is overreaching and taking advantage wherever he can, taking advantage of the ignorance, the weakness, or the necessity of his fellow-creatures? Which of the two is a happy man, I need not tell you. And then, again, duties of mercy — duties of charity. Why, a good man is to show favor and lend, a good man is to be merciful after his power, and Christian people are "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction;" what, does this make them unhappy? Little do those know of the joys of benevolence, and the pleasure connected with the exercise of the various affections of the human heart, who would represent such persons as unhappy. When was it you visited the widow or the fatherless, or some sad fellow-creature in a state of wretchedness, and had it in your power to afford relief? Why, when you saw the uplifted eye suffused with tears, and when you heard the expressions of gratitude, first to God for disposing you thus to act, and then to you as the instrument of relief — I put it to you, oh! what a sweet satisfaction, that you have had the power and the grace, the means and the dispo-



sition, to alleviate the sufferings and the woe of your fellow-creatures ! Why, then, I say, all these, instead of hindering our bliss, greatly augment the amount, and still the text is true — “ Happy is that people, whose God is the Lord.”

3. But then, it is urged again — Religion sometimes exposes a man to trials, and afflictions, and persecutions, and sometimes even to death ; where then is the happiness of “ the people whose God is the Lord ? ”

My dear friends, told I you not, sometime ago, in this discourse, that this is a happiness which depends not either upon the smiles of the world, or the frowns of men ? I admit a good man may have “ his name cast out as evil ; ” I admit that “ all manner of evil may be said of him ” ( but it is “ falsely ” said of him, or he is not a good man,) “ for the Lord’s sake ; ” but then he is not unhappy for this ; no, “ rejoice and be exceeding glad,” the Spirit of God and of glory is resting upon you. I admit a good man may be persecuted ; but then “ blessed are ye, when men shall persecute you, for so persecuted they the prophets before you.” Oh ! you are treading in the right path ; you are walking in the high way, in which kings, and confessors, and righteous men went before you. Push your objection to its utmost limit ; let a pious man be incarcerated in a dungeon, and let him be beaten, and let his feet be made fast in the stocks ; what then ? is he unhappy ? answer me Paul and Silas, blessing God ; they had been preaching the good news of the kingdom, and they had been beaten, and put in prison, and their feet were made fast in the stocks, and it was midnight — and what then ? at midnight “ Paul and Silas prayed ” — ah ! but they did more than that — “ at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises to God.” Then they were happy ; they were so happy they could not but sing the praises of God, even in a dungeon ; and though it was midnight, perhaps it was the happiest hour they ever spent, up to that period.

I said, push your objection to its utmost extent ; let the good man be called to suffer martyrdom in the cause of Jesus ; what then ? Oh ! he is not unhappy. I remember a case, where a man whom I could name, a martyr to the truth, said while the flames were consuming his body, “ I feel no pain, this to me is a bed of roses.” Perhaps the philosophy of the case is this — the sensations of Divine love were so powerful in the man’s soul, as to overpower the sensation of pain. So that living or dying, “ happy is that people whose God is the Lord.”

4. However it is urged again, (and this is the last objection that I will state,) “ I have made the trial, and I have not found it so.”

Now, this objection really appears plausible — “ I have made the trial, and I have not found it so.” You have made the trial. And

let me ask, then, Who are you, that have made the trial? Why, of course, you say, you are a Christian. And what evidence have you to give that you are a Christian? Why, you bear a Christian name, your name is registered yonder as a Christian; and, moreover, you have been the subject of a Christian ordinance, you were recognized in the rite of water baptism; and, moreover, you have attended to certain Christian duties, you have read the Scriptures — a Christian duty, you have attended a place of worship — a Christian duty, you have (occasionally at least) approached the table of the Lord — a Christian duty to do so regularly, and you sometimes give a portion of your property to maintain the cause of God at home, or send the gospel abroad among heathen nations — Christian duties these. Well, what more? Ah! but if you falter, I must speak out. What! do you think nobody knows what more? Ah! to-night at the house of God — and to-morrow night yonder at the contaminating house of Rimmon; in the morning associating with those who keep holy-day — but, before noon or night, commingling with those whose conversation savors not of religion, and of the things of God; to-day engaged in religious exercises — and to-morrow pursuing worldly vanities; a worldly-minded Christian, a pleasure-taking Christian, a sporting Christian, a wine-bibbing Christian. Oh! I wonder not that *your* Christianity did not make you happy; it could not. How can the most sovereign specific restore a diseased man to health and soundness, if all the while he will be eagerly swallowing large portions of contrary aliment, which tend directly to irritate and feed the disease. It cannot be. And let me say to that man, Whoever thou art, God has made no half-engagement with either thee or me. He has not said he will make us happy if we will give half our heart to him, and the other half to the world, and if we try to bring together and to unite what God has put asunder. “Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.” Oh! we must come to a decision. “Who is on the Lord’s side?” The religion of the Bible will not, and cannot make you happy, unless you give up every thing inconsistent with it. There must be the abandonment of all sin. Give up sin, or God will give up you. You must part with all, if you would find all. Oh! abandon all sin; and not only renounce sin, but renounce all dependence upon your virtues, and come, stripped of all, poor, helpless, hell-deserving sinners, and cast yourselves upon the mercy of Jesus Christ. Believe on him, who died for you; believe on him who lives for you, your advocate before the throne; God will reveal himself to you in Jesus Christ, as your God, and you shall know him, and you shall love him, and you shall delight in him, and, as sure as God is true, and as sure as this is his book, you shall be happy.

And then, realizing all this happiness yourselves, you will be concerned that others should be as happy as you are, that others should be as blessed as you are, that others should enjoy the security you enjoy. And I know not the man that enjoys religion himself, and that wishes to keep religion to himself. What! a monopoly in religion; the worst monopoly of all, the most unnatural monopoly of all. Why, religion is not weakened by its diffusion. The sun in the firmament of heaven, is not less valuable to me, because it gives light to you. No, my friends; and religion is not less a treasure to me, because it is a treasure to you. If there be any pleasure at all, in giving we receive, and in blessing we are blessed.

You are come here this evening under the influence of religion. It would be an affectation in this heart of mine, which I should utterly despise, were I capable of seeming to be indifferent to the spectacle now displayed in this house — a week-day evening, and such a crowd of blood-bought souls before me. It is a rich recompence for the toils of the past night. For I was in the town of Leeds at the same hour, last night, that I entered this place of worship for this service; and some might suppose that having attended a public meeting there last evening, I was more fit for some other place than where I now am, on arriving in your metropolis this evening. But it is all too little in the service of God. Besides, we need only come to the fire in order to be warmed; and we need only meet with those that love our Savior in order to be refreshed; “iron sharpeneth iron, and a man the countenance of his friend.” If the Lord be pleased to use even physical strength, (that is his gift, and we must not boast as if we had not received it; “let not the strong man glory in his strength;”) we owe our blessed master all; oh! to him our more than all is due. Permit me to say, however, I *am* refreshed in meeting you on this occasion in this sanctuary.

The Trustees of this place make their respectful annual appeal to you. You are aware that they have taken the whole responsibility, and without having any property in the place themselves, and that they have done so for the glory of God and the good of souls. They have become the guardians of the place, according to the provisions of the Trust, for the benefit of the Society worshipping here, while bricks, and stones, and timber, shall cleave together. Then if they have done this, and from these motives, they ought to be encouraged. I think so; and you think so, and your conduct will say the same thing this evening. I know to whom I speak; and I will not detain you longer, as though to this good work you were reluctant. Let the fire of love glow in your bosoms, and then it will speak to your hearts, and your

hearts will speak to your hands, and your hands, thus spoken to, will know where to go, and what to do, (for the heart is intimately connected with the hand,) and then we shall have a noble collection, and glory will redound to the name of the Lord.

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## SERMON XXIV.

AN ADDRESS TO CHILDREN.

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BY REV. A. FLETCHER, D. D.  
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“Sir, we would see Jesus.”—JOHN xii. 21.

I DO not know if there is a child present, who has ever read the whole of the Bible, from the first verse of Genesis to the last verse of Revelation. It is probable some of you may have done so; I cannot tell but some hundreds of you may. Now you know, my dear young friends, that in the Bible there is an astonishing number of names, both in the Old Testament and in the New. But I ask you, did you ever meet in the whole Bible so beautiful a name as that of Jesus? *I* never did. You may read the whole of the Bible through, and you will not find in it a lovelier, a sweeter, a more blessed, a more comforting name, than the name of Jesus.

Do you know the meaning of the name Jesus? It signifies a Savior. It is a Hebrew name, and it corresponds with the name *Joshua* in the Old Testament. You recollect the noble captain of the Lord's host—captain Joshua. He was a wonderful man, a very holy man as well as a great captain and a great general, and his name *Joshua* signifies a Savior; he got the name because he led the children of Israel through the river Jordan into the land of Canaan, and conducted them in all their battles, and succeeded in getting possession of the land, and delivered it up to the Israelites; therefore he was called Joshua, because he was their Savior. Now this name is given to the Lord Jesus Christ because he is a Savior. Joshua was a great savior; but Christ is a Savior infinitely greater. Joshua saved the Israelites from temporal enemies; but our Jesus saves his people from spiritual enemies. Joshua saved the children of Israel from the giants—the Anakim, as they called them; great tall men, of such extraordinary size, that if one of them stood in this middle aisle, his head would be as high as that clock



in front of the gallery ; Joshua fought with them, and destroyed them. But the Lord Jesus Christ delivers his people from three greater giants ; their names are — Sin — Satan — and the World. And Jesus is such a mighty Savior that he delivers from hell. Joshua led the children of Israel to a most beautiful country called Canaan, the loveliest spot upon the face of the earth ; oh ! it was beautiful — beautiful for its mountains and its lovely green hills and its valleys and its meadows and plains, beautiful for its lakes and its streams and its rivers, beautiful for its noble cities, and the chief of them was called Jerusalem ; but Christ gives to his people, and to little children that love him, a far better land than Canaan ; he gives them the heavenly Canaan, he gives them heaven, he gives them the heaven of heavens —

—— “ the land of pure delight,  
Where saints immortal reign ;  
Infinite day excludes the night,  
And pleasures banish pain.”

Now, my dear young friends, I have to ask you this question — a very serious one, but a very plain one — and I ask all the teachers too : do you love the name of Jesus ? Every pious child does. You that have loving fathers and mothers, do not you love the name *Father*, and the name *Mother* ? — and the name *Sister*, and the name *Brother*, you that have loving brothers and sisters ? — and the name *Minister*, and the name *Teacher*, you that have loving ministers and loving teachers ? The very names are pleasant to your ears. But if you are the children of God, the name of Jesus will be more delightful to your ear than any of these, or the name of the nearest and the dearest friend on earth. Oh ! I hope that a great many of these dear little children can join with their hearts in the following beautiful lines :

“ Jesus ! I love thy charming name ;  
'T is pleasure to my ear ;  
Fain would I sound it out so loud,  
That heaven and earth might hear.”

I must explain to you, before I enter upon the illustration of the text, that these words — “ Sir, we would see Jesus ” — were spoken by some Greeks, who came to Jerusalem to observe the feast of the Passover. They came a great many hundred miles ; for if you have got in your school the map of Palestine or of the journeys of Paul, you may see that Greece is a very long way off from Jerusalem. Now you know, strangers from the country, when they come to London, are anxious to hear the news that is to be heard in this great city ; and one day somebody told these Greeks, while they were in Jerusalem, that there was a very wonderful person about, called Jesus ; that he opened

the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf, made the dumb to sing and the lame to walk, and healed all diseases, and a little while before had gone to a village called Bethany, (about the same distance from Jerusalem that Islington is from London,) and there he went to the burying ground, where a friend of his, of the name of Lazarus, had been laid in the grave, and he stood beside it with the tears running down his cheeks, and he actually raised the dead man to life. But, said the Greeks, is this true? we never heard such wonderful things. Oh! yes, says one, it is true, for I have a friend that saw the very man that was raised from the dead. Perhaps one comes up at the time — a most respectable man, of excellent character and piety, and says, I saw the man yesterday; I went to his house to see him, and there was a crowd of people round the door, and at last he came out and showed himself. Oh! said the Greeks, we should like to see this Jesus; where can we get a sight of the performer of these mighty miracles? Then there was just passing by a plain, decent looking man, and some one said — Do you see that man? that is Philip, one of his disciples. Oh! said the Greeks, let us go and ask him; and they went up to him, and said, “Sir, we would see Jesus.” We are not told whether they did see him, but there is every probability that they did; and I trust they saw him, not only as a wonderful man, but as God and man in one person. Oh! remember, little children, he was not only a man, but he was God and man — man and God; his humanity was not his divinity, nor was his divinity his humanity, but both were united in one person — God and man — the Savior of lost sinners.

Now, my dear young friends, I want to show you Jesus to-day. Do you not know he is in London? A great many saw him yesterday; hundreds, if not thousands. But they did not see his body; *that* is in heaven, and they will not see it till they get there; they saw him with the eye of the understanding and the eye of faith — saw him in his divinity. And the Lord Jesus in his divinity is here in this chapel — the very Jesus, whose body was nailed to the accursed tree. And I have come this afternoon expressly to show you Jesus; that is all my business; I have nothing else to do; and when I have given you a sight of Christ, I will leave you in his blessed hands. Then you and I shall part; but I hope, if we do not meet again on earth, we shall meet in heaven.

I hope you desire to see him. If I were to ask you, Do you wish to see Jesus? — I hope you would exclaim with one voice, — Sir — Minister — “we would see Jesus.” Then, my dear young friends, I say to you, come and see him. Come and see Jesus in Beth-

lehem; come and see Jesus in Egypt; come and see Jesus in Nazareth; come and see Jesus in the temple; come and see Jesus on the cross; come and see Jesus in the grave; come and see Jesus in heaven.

I. My beloved little children, come and see Jesus in Bethlehem.

Do you know the meaning of that word? It is a Hebrew word, and it signifies the *house of bread*: *beth* the house, *lehem* of bread. Is not that an extraordinary name to be given to a town? I believe that name was given to it, because the Lord Jesus Christ was to be born in that town, and he is bread. Little child, whenever you see a loaf, remember that — Jesus is bread. When I see the little lambs going along the street, I say to myself, Ah! Jesus is the lamb of God; and when you see bread, remember Jesus is bread — the bread of life. Bethlehem was called by this name, because he was to be born in it; it was prophesied that he should, many hundreds of years before, by the prophet Malachi, and therefore it was even then called Bethlehem — the house of bread — and is called so to the present day.

Bethlehem is six miles south of Jerusalem; and it is the town where king David was born, and therefore it was also called the City of David, or David's Town. And now let us, in our meditations, take a walk to Bethlehem, and go and see Jesus.

Suppose we have passed through the gate of the city, and got into one of the main streets; how shall we proceed? If we ask where it is that Christ is born, the person we ask very likely cannot tell. Perhaps some little child present is ready to say, Oh! surely Jesus, the Son of God, must be born in some great palace, more splendid and magnificent than the queen's palace, where she receives her nobles and her ministers of state. Ah! my young friend, that was not the case; Jesus was not born in a palace, though he made the heavenly palace. Suppose we go to the chief hotel of the town, and ask if Jesus is born there; and the porter answers — "No, I do not know such a person; but I did hear this morning that a poor woman from Nazareth is lodging in that stable with her husband, Joseph, and that a little child has been born there." Then we enter the stable; I think I am now walking up to the manger; and there, in the manger that holds the food for the horses and oxen, while they eat it, we see a beautiful babe, and his name is — Jesus. And there by his side sits his mother Mary — a humble, unassuming, pious individual, not the fine lady represented in Popish pictures in the shop windows, dressed out in fine clothes, but a poor woman in coarse attire, though with meekness and gentleness and humility beaming in her eye. There is Joseph too, the supposed

father of Christ ; but he was not his father — he was only his protecting father, raised up to watch over the dear child, during the early years of his existence. Oh ! what a sight, my beloved young friends ! Jesus, the babe, lying in a manger.

There were a number of shepherds that evening conversing together, and praying, and singing hymns, in a beautiful field in Palestine, not far from Bethlehem ; and on a sudden they thought they heard music. The sun was set, and the stars were sparkling in the sky ; but said one, “ I think I hear music ; ” and said another, “ I think I hear it too ; ” but so sweet as they never heard before. Then it became louder, till at last there was a full chorus ; and when they lifted up their eyes to the heavens, they saw a multitude of angels, and heard them singing this hymn to the most melodious music — “ Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” And one of the angels alighted down upon the earth, and came up to them ; the shepherds were all pale with fear, and ready to faint, but the angel said to them, “ Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy.”

“ ‘ Ye shepherds go,’ the angel said,  
To Beth’em’s city fly ;  
The promised infant, born to-day,  
Doth in a manger lie.”

There are some venerable looking men going to the stable, with long robes and long beards, and turbans on their heads, and parcels or bundles in their hands. I do not know how many there were of these wise men, but they came from a distant part of the earth, and they went softly and gently up to the manger ; and when they saw the babe, probably upon Mary’s knees, they fell down and worshipped him, and they opened their parcels, and one poured into Joseph’s lap a quantity of silver, and another a quantity of gold, and others frankincense and myrrh and precious ointment ; and in one moment Joseph and Mary were put in possession of great property. And the reason was this. Joseph and Mary had a long journey before them ; they must fly out of the town as quickly as possible, for there is a great murderer upon the throne — murderer Herod — and he will send his men of war, his blood-hounds of death ; and if Joseph and Mary do not escape at once, his messengers will soon enter the stable, and plunge the dagger into the bosom of the infant ; so God sent these wise men, with the gold and the silver and the spices, to defray the expenses of a long journey to a country I am about to mention, where they must remain till the murderer is dead.



II. I ask you, then, next, come and see Jesus in Egypt.

Egypt, as some of you know, is situated upon the sea called the Mediterranean, or, in the Bible, the great sea. It is a country that is about six hundred miles long, and three hundred broad; and there is a great river flowing through it, called the river Nile. That astonishing river overflows its banks twice a year; it becomes amazingly large for a short time, and then it becomes small again, and leaves the ground that it had covered exceedingly fruitful, so that it is never necessary to put any manure upon it, and Egypt produces the richest crops. You recollect, that Joseph was in Egypt, and he rose, from being a slave, to be the second person in the land. And you recollect, that the Israelites remained in Egypt between three and four hundred years; they were very happy at first, but at last they were very miserable, because they were all made slaves; God, however, sent a deliverer to them, called Moses, who led them out of the land, and they escaped from the hand of their enemies. And now the Lord Jesus Christ was taken to Egypt. I cannot tell you how he was conveyed there, over the deserts of Arabia; but so it was, he was conveyed in safety. And I do not know whether any people went with Joseph and Mary; as far as I know, they went alone; but I have no doubt angels were with them, and it is probable (though the Bible does not speak expressly upon it,) that they conversed with angels by the way, as Jacob did at Bethel. However, they reached Egypt, and took a little cottage on the banks of the Nile. I dare say, the idolatrous Egyptians were very much astonished; they could not understand where they came from, or why they came to that place. They saw they were very decent people; they paid for every thing they had, and conducted themselves with the greatest propriety; and I have no doubt the Egyptians went many times to see the little Jewish child, for they are a people that are rather black in the countenance, and they are very fond of looking upon those that are fair, and that come from a more northerly climate; and Jesus was a beautiful child. I have no doubt many an Egyptian mother came and dandled that child upon her knee; and we cannot tell but Christ afterwards saved their souls.

There they remained a little while; and then an angel came to them, and said — Herod is dead, who sought the young child's life; and now you may return. So they took farewell of all their neighbors, for I have no doubt they lived in good fellowship with them; and the Egyptians, I dare say, were sorry to part with Joseph and Mary and the beautiful little boy. But they left Egypt, and passed through

the deserts of Arabia, and at last came to the Holy Land ; and they went to the place where they originally lived, namely, a place called Nazareth ; and there they remained for a very considerable time — till our Savior entered upon his ministry.

III. Now next, my dear young friends, come and see Jesus in the temple.

Do you know what a beautiful building the temple was ? I cannot describe it, it was so beautiful. There was first a temple built by Solomon, and that was beautiful, beyond description ; but that was demolished, and there was another temple built by a great and good man called Zerubbabel — a man of very considerable wealth and a man of great piety. That second temple was afterwards repaired by a very bad man ; for bad kings are sometimes great builders, and I have read in a little history, that many of the worst kings have been the greatest builders — built noble cities and magnificent palaces. King Herod was a great monster of wickedness, but he spent an amazing sum of money in beautifying the temple. There is not such a building in all London, as that temple ; Westminster Hall is larger considerably ; but in magnificence and splendor and beauty, Westminster Hall, or St. Paul's Cathedral, is a mere hovel compared with that temple, so remarkable was it for its elegance and loveliness. It was as white as snow ; it was built of white marble, as white as alabaster, and the stones were twelve feet square. Some of you little boys are the sons of carpenters and masons, and you can take your father's rule to-night, and measure twelve feet in every direction ; that was the size of the great marble blocks of stone, by which the temple was adorned ; and they were as smooth as glass, so beautifully were they polished. Then there was a grand portico to this temple, and over it was the figure of an amazing vine, made of gold ; all the little twigs and branches and leaves were made of solid gold, and the clusters that were hanging down were made of precious stones ; and when the sun shone upon it, it was truly astonishing to look at. The Greeks and magicians, when they came and stood opposite to it, were amazed beyond description. Oh ! I think I see these country folks looking up to this vine, and wondering at the beautiful golden leaves, and the multitude of clusters of precious stones. And that vile monster Herod, that sought to murder Christ, gave a considerable sum of money towards completing this vine. Some writers tell us, (and it is not unlikely,) that the Lord Jesus Christ was one day standing with his disciples over against this very portico, and they were looking up at this noble vine, and Peter was saying to John, What a wonderful vine that

is! — and John was saying to Philip, What an amazing vine it is! — but Christ said, laying his hand upon his bosom, “*I am the true Vine:*” that vine has no life, it is only the resemblance of a vine, “*I am the Vine, and ye are the branches.*”

Come and see Jesus in this temple for a few minutes. Come and see Mary carrying him in her arms, along the marble floor, when he was only eight days old; and Joseph is along with her. Do you see that old man, with his hoary locks, and his snow-white beard down to his breast? I see him now with the eye of my mind. Oh! what a lovely, gentle face! — with all its wrinkles it looks so sweet: I never saw such a pleasant old man. Would you like to know his name? That is the venerable Simeon. He is walking up to Mary; he cannot walk fast, he has nearly finished his journey; he is tottering and feeble, but at last he comes up to Mary, and says, “Give me the babe.” Mary looks at him, and without any questioning at once takes her beautiful little babe, and lays him down on those old arms; and then Simeon kisses the child’s lovely lips, and presses him to his bosom, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, exclaims — “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” And then he gave up the dear little babe to his mother. There was another aged pilgrim, too — an interesting old lady; it is not said that she took up the child in her arms, but probably she did; and there she gazed on him with wonder, love, and admiration.

But now come and see Jesus in the temple again. I have another sight to show you: I must take you into a retired room in another part of the temple — not the great hall. Do you see those twelve old men sitting there in close conversation? They look like very learned men, and they *are* learned men, and they are well acquainted with the Old Testament in the Hebrew language; for that is the language they speak. But who is that sitting in the midst of them — that beautiful lad about twelve years of age? Oh! look at his modest countenance; look at his gentle eye, look at the affection that beams in his face, look at his whole appearance — the perfection of excellence. Observe: he is asking those old men questions; not with any degree of forwardness, but with the greatest humility. He is saying to one, What is the meaning of this? — and the old learned doctor is quite astonished, and he says to the next, I cannot answer this question, can you assist me? Oh no, says his friend, I cannot: that is too hard for me. And then that beautiful lad tells him the meaning of the difficult question; opens it up, and explains it, to their great astonishment, so that one says to another — What a prodigy! we never saw such a

prodigy of learning and of wisdom before. But there is a woman entering in the very midst of the conversation, and she says to him, My Son! That is Mary. For two days she has lost him; and when she was returning from Jerusalem to Nazareth — what is very strange, and I cannot explain it — for one whole day she had never seen her Son, nor even so much as asked herself, Where is my blessed Son, Jesus? — and at last, when she went all through the company, (for there were a great number of them walking together,) she found he was not there, and she returned with Joseph to Jerusalem with a heavy heart, saying, “We have lost our Son; where shall we find him?” And they went from one street to another, and from one square to another, but they could not see him; and at last Mary said — Let us go to the temple; perhaps we shall find him there. Ah! my dear young friends, if you go to his sanctuary, you will find Jesus there; this is one of his temples, and he is here to-day. So they went there, and at last they went into the room that I have been describing; and there they saw him in the midst of the doctors, answering questions and putting questions, and showing that his wisdom was more than man’s — that his wisdom was of God. And when his mother asks him to come along with her, he does not resist; he does not say — I am the mighty Jesus; mother, go home, and leave me here, for I must remain about my Father’s work. No, but he instantly submits himself with great affection; he says — I had some work to do with these learned and aged men, but now it is done, and I will go home. And so Christ left the temple, and went home to Nazareth.

#### IV. Now, in the fourth place, come and see Jesus at Nazareth.

Should you like to know where Nazareth is? It is seventy miles north of Jerusalem — about as far as Northampton is north of London. Nazareth is built (for it still remains,) upon the top of a hill; and there is a valley all around it, and then hills rise again, so that it is on a hill that stands in the middle of a hollow — as if it rose in the middle of a great cup. And this city was in Galilee; that was the name of the province, or as we should call it, the county or shire; and it was not far from a beautiful lake of water, perhaps twenty times wider than the Serpentine river in Hyde Park. There the river Jordan empties itself; and from Nazareth you could see the beautiful lake, with the fishermen’s boats upon it — a most beautiful sight — and there our Savior walked upon the waves.

We know very little indeed of what Christ did at Nazareth; but there he remained till he was thirty years of age, and he worked



with his father, in his occupation of a carpenter. Oh! children, be astonished at this amazing thing: the great God, the Architect of the universe, who made the heavens and the earth, dwelling in the humanity of Jesus, and working at a carpenter's bench for years! I cannot utter it, without feeling my mind filled with wonder. I dare say, some of you have fathers that are carpenters; will you remind them to-night that Joseph, the protecting father of Christ, was a humble carpenter, a hard-working man, and Jesus worked at his father's bench, making pieces of furniture for houses — he who by the arm of his omnipotence made the sun and moon and stars.

But there is one thing more that I must show you in Nazareth. After our blessed Lord had entered upon his public ministry, he thought he would pay a visit to Nazareth again. He did not expect they would receive him kindly; if I went to my native village, which is in Perthshire, in Scotland, I should expect they would receive me kindly, but the Lord Jesus knew that he should not be welcome at Nazareth, and that the inhabitants would ill use him. He went into their synagogues; and preached the gospel to them; and they were so filled with rage, that they gnashed their teeth at him, and not satisfied with unkind and abusive words, coarse and rude language, they laid hold of him, and said — Now we will put him to death; we will hurl him over the steep precipice by the side of our city. And away they carried him by main force, and rushed like a torrent till they got him to the top of the hill, perhaps fifty feet perpendicular. But just when they were going to throw him over, he escaped out of their hands; they could not tell what had become of him in the confusion, and they looked at one and another with amazement, because they had not succeeded in murdering the blessed Jesus of Nazareth. Oh! my young friends, may *you* feel very differently. I think I can read the minds of some of the little children present, and they are saying — If the Lord Jesus Christ came to London in his humanity, I would run to see him, and fall down at his feet, yea, and clasp his feet in my arms and kiss them like Mary; oh! how I should like to see the blessed Jesus! My beloved young friends, you will never so see him upon earth; but if you are holy children, you will see him in his humanity in heaven. These very eyes, that are now rolling in their sockets, and sparkling with lustre, shall see Jesus; and you may say with holy Job — “Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.”

V. But now, my young friends, come and see Jesus on the cross. This is a dreadful sight; but you and I must tarry a little at the cross before we part.

This cross was fixed on Calvary, a little way out of the city; and it consisted of a large piece of timber, several feet longer than a tall man, with a piece of wood across it, to which the hands were nailed. Your Savior was nailed to the cross; and when it made the blood gush out, instead of complaining of the soldiers for being so cruel as to nail him there, he uttered this prayer — “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Do you see those three women standing near the cross? I will tell you their names. The name of the first is Mary; and the name of the second is Mary; and the name of the third is Mary. All their names were *Mary*; and that word signifies *bitterness*. There was Mary, the mother of Christ; there was Mary, the wife of Cleopas; and there was Mary Magdalen. And there was a young man standing beside Mary the mother of Christ; and his name was John; and sobbing bitterly, because of the agonies of Jesus her son. And at three o'clock in the afternoon, a wonderful event took place; your Lord was nailed on the cross at nine o'clock in the forenoon, and at three o'clock in the afternoon (called, in Jewish calculation, the ninth hour,) when Jesus gave up the ghost, the whole sky became dark. What would be your surprise now, if all on a sudden this afternoon the sky were to become black, and the darkness so great, that you could not so much as see one another, sitting in your pews. Oh! I think I hear the children screaming, and exclaiming, Surely the end of the world is come. So great was the darkness, that the boldest men among the Jews fell upon the ground in terror. And the very earth shook; and the graves were torn open; and the veil of the temple was rent in two.

But yet there is a sweet voice from the cross; and it is addressed to every little child. And the voice is this:

“Come, and welcome; sinner come.”

“From the cross, uplifted high,  
Where the Savior deigns to die,  
What melodious sounds I hear,  
Bursting on my ravish'd ear!  
'Love's redeeming work is done;  
Come, and welcome; sinner, come.'”

VI. Next, my young friends, come and see Jesus in his grave.

There was a funeral procession that evening; and it was the funeral of Christ. There are many that keep a certain day, called Good

Friday, to commemorate it; that was last Friday. There was no hearse with six beautiful black horses, and no undertakers by the side with their black rods tipped with brass, and there was no coffin. There was Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, and some of their servants or attendants, and some pious women; and they washed his body, and applied precious ointment to it; and they wrapped it gently and affectionately in a beautiful web of linen, that Joseph had purchased at one of the shops in Jerusalem; and they took another piece of linen, and wrapped it round his precious face; and then they carried his body to a beautiful garden belonging to Joseph, where there was a grave, that Joseph had prepared for himself, dug out of a rock. It was a beautiful place, probably more beautiful than the Cemetery at Highgate, which I greatly admire; it was adorned with citron trees and orange trees; and a large stone was rolled to the mouth of the grave, and some of the friends of Jesus watched the tomb. Oh! children, look at those lips which proclaimed the gospel, now silent in death; those hands which performed miracles, now motionless; those eyes which beamed with such love and compassion, now silent in darkness; that side, with an open wound, inflicted by the cruel spear.

But I have another sight to show you,—and it is lovely and glorious; come and see Jesus rising out of the grave. Who is that flying through the skies, brighter than the morning star? It is an angel. Watch his course. He comes down with his golden wings, and he lights at the door of the grave, and in one moment he rolls the great stone from the mouth of the sepulchre, though it is so heavy that it would require a great many men to lift it. And then the blessed Jesus rises. I think I see him coming out of the grave; oh! what a lovely, placid, glorious countenance! Then is fulfilled that wonderful prediction—“O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction.” And now join with me, my dear little children, in the following lines—

“Our Lord is risen from the dead,  
Our Jesus is gone up on high;  
The powers of hell are captive led,  
Dragg'd to the portals of the sky.”

#### VII. Now, lastly, come and see Christ in Heaven.

Children, if you have the eye of faith, (and some of you have,) look at him. See him on his throne—a throne higher than the highest of heaven's thrones; see him in robes, brighter than the sun; see him with his crown, crowned with many crowns of glory. See him with his attendants, millions of angels, myriads of saints, falling prostrate in his presence. Oh! what a sight! Should you like to see

Christ in heaven? If you have any desire to see him in that glorious place, you must receive him; by the Holy Spirit you must give yourselves up to him, you must love him with all your hearts. Then you will be able truly to join in those beautiful words, that you have often sung —

“ Oh ! how happy we shall be,  
 For our Savior we shall see,  
 Exalted on his throne :  
 Oh ! that will be joyful,  
 When we meet to part no more.”

And now, my beloved children, before we part, I have a gift to present to you in the name of Jesus. I have not a purse of gold, to give to each of these dear little boys; I have not a beautiful necklace, to give to each of these dear little girls. I once saw a necklace, consisting of brilliant diamonds, and valued at £70,000; I have no necklace to give you, nor bracelets for your arms, nor any earthly honors, or riches, or title deeds of estates, nor any cup of carnal pleasure. But in the name of Jesus, I have something to present this afternoon, more valuable than the heavens themselves. It is a “ Pearl of great price;” it is an “ unspeakable gift;” it is a Savior — Christ the Lord.

Little boy, Christ says, Receive me; Little girl, Christ says, Receive me. Christ says—My son, receive me; My daughter, receive me; Teachers, receive me; Ministers, receive me; Visitors and hearers, receive me; Parents of these children, receive me. Receive me as your Savior; I gave myself to death for you, and I now give myself to you as your Savior from sin and from hell.

Oh! my beloved young friends, answer—(may God the Spirit enable you! Holy Spirit, give them thy grace!)—Jesus, lovely, Jesus, mighty Jesus, merciful Jesus, glorious Jesus, we now receive thee; thou art ours, ours wholly, ours only, ours for ever.



## SERMON XXV.

MAN'S HAPPINESS DEPENDANT ON HIS COMING TO CHRIST.

BY REV. TIMOTHY EAST.

"Ye will not come to me that ye might have life."—JOHN v. 40.

YOU have read, I have no doubt, the memoirs of many wise and good men, and I will venture to say that while reading them you never had suggested to your mind any conception that they were anything more than wise and good men, wise and good men compassed with infirmities, who, with all their excellencies, had corresponding defects. Now if Jesus Christ had been only a man, as some say he was, we ought to be able to go through his memoirs without receiving even the slightest impression, from anything that is said of him or by him, that he was anything more than a wise and good man, who, with all his excellencies, to be human should have had some corresponding defects. But this is not the case; and I feel myself under no moral obligation, much as I respect the claims of justice, to believe any man who can tell me that he has gone through the history of the Savior's life with attention, and never had an impression that he was anything more than a mere man. But how is this? There is either some grand error in the writer, or the Son of God occupies a rank higher than a mere son of man. Indeed, my brethren, without dwelling on particular words, is it possible that such language as that which I have now read, could have fallen from the lips of a mere man? Eternal life dependant on an application to him! — an implied condemnation of eternal woe against every man who does not come to Jesus Christ for everlasting life! Did ever man speak like this?

In illustrating, my brethren, the words of my text, allow me to notice two things: first, that the final happiness of man is made dependant on his coming to Jesus Christ; and, secondly, strange as it may appear, men will not come to him that they might have eternal life.

I. I remark, then, in the first place, that THE FINAL SALVATION OF MAN IS MADE DEPENDANT ON HIS COMING TO JESUS CHRIST.

Jesus Christ is unquestionably a unique being, diverse from all others, possessing the essential attributes of humanity without the least tinge of imperfection, and the essential attributes of divinity without

any abstraction from their greatness or glory. He is, my brethren, a being who exists in a condition unlike that of any other being, not a condition either of simple humanity or of simple divinity, but one that combines the attributes of the divine and human nature in his own person. He is thus constituted a Savior able and willing to "save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him." Hence eternal life is made dependant upon a personal application or coming to him. Now this expression "come" is synonymous with believing in him, trusting in him, depending upon him. To sustain the character of a Savior it was necessary that he should suffer, the just for the unjust; it was necessary that he should give his life a ransom for men, it was necessary that his blood should be able to cleanse from all accumulated guilt, and that he should be invested with power to remit the guilt of sins, and to confer the gift of eternal life. To obtain these benefits the sinner is required to come to Christ. It is not a corporeal act; it is not, my brethren, a mere bowing at the name of Jesus whenever that name is uttered; it is not a mere speculative assent to the truth of what is stated respecting him; but it is a personal application in the exercise of an enlightened faith, trusting to him to fulfil the promise on which faith is founded for the hope of acceptance and eternal life. And you will allow me ere I proceed, to ask you a few plain questions in reference to this coming to Christ. My hearers, have you ever felt the guilt of your own sins pressing heavily upon your conscience? Have you ever perceived that awful abyss of danger to which they have so justly and inevitably exposed you? Have you ever been brought to feel deep and ingenuous contrition of soul for having sinned against your own conscience, sinned against your own social and spiritual interest? Have you ever adopted the piercing language which once fell from the lips of those who were in conscious danger, "Lord save or I perish?" Have you ever felt every other foundation of acceptance moving from beneath your hold, and been convinced that there is no salvation save through faith in the name and mediation of Christ? These are preparatory convictions, and preparatory convictions qualifying a sinner to come to Christ to be saved. Can you adopt the language, with which I have no doubt you are familiar,

" Other refuge have I none,  
Hangs my helpless soul on thee."

Do you trust in Christ?

Now the incidents which are recorded in the history of our Lord's life, are recorded for some other purpose, than that merely of instructing us in what he did and how he acted. The incidents to which I am

about to refer embody great principles, and teach us on what principles he now conducts his mediatorial power and the administration of mercy and of grace to men. Hence, when a sinner came that was blind; when a leper came that wanted to be cleansed; when an application was made to Jesus Christ for any cure on behalf of the suppliant, or on behalf of another for whom that suppliant pleaded, Jesus Christ required, as a qualification for the reception of the blessing, an acknowledgment that he was able to confer it. And though, my brethren, some have taken an objection against this requisition on the part of the Son of God, when in the human form, allow me to say it is one of the common-place principles on which human nature every where acts. You go and ask a favor from a friend. Will he confer the favor unless you express a belief that he is able to do so? Certainly not. An application to an inefficient power could only be regarded as an insult. Hence, Jesus Christ, acting on the common-place principles of human nature, required that any one applying to him for a favor should acknowledge his ability to confer it. And so now, if you wish to be saved by Christ, when you come it must be in a full belief that he can confer salvation. Mistrust renders an application offensive; a doubt paralyzes the omnipotence of his power. There must be an implicit, an unfeigned assent. He has no objection to exercise mercy towards the guilty, by compromising his own dignity, or letting down the majesty of his power and his glory to a level with the infirmities and impeachments of human frailty and unbelief. There must be the admission of power where there is the prayer of penitence. You must come to Christ under a full belief that he is able and willing to save you, not at some remote period, but now. "Lord save or I perish!" When? When I feel in the act of perishing—save now by the power of the Savior's love, and the manifestation of his pardoning grace. There is a question that is often mooted, and which cannot, my brethren, be set at rest too speedily, because it is a question which hampers the opinion and very much disquiets the feelings of a sinner who is under the first impressions of guilt. "May I come to the Savior now?" I am a guilty, worthless, helpless, hell-deserving sinner. May I venture to come to him now? The question is proposed, my brethren, under an implied belief in the necessity of tarrying till some pre-requisites are obtained to induce the Savior to exercise mercy and grace, if not with more facility, at least with more complacency. Now to set the question at rest, so far, my hearers, as your feelings are concerned, let me ask what qualifies a pauper to solicit relief? Is it not his necessities? Does the pauper require a small degree of wealth to relieve him from his indigence before he will go and solicit charity from the

benevolent? No. The poorer he is, the more urgent will be his claim. Who solicits the exercise of the royal clemency with the most feeling and in the most earnest manner? The criminal whose life is forfeited. He who is merely under the liability of being transported from his native country for a term of years, has not such an interest in the exercise of mercy as the man whose life is forfeited, whose life belongs to the sovereign power. It is the extremity of the case justifies the urgency and promptness of the appeal. And therefore you, O man, if for example, you came into the chapel to-night a hardened sinner, if the last sentence that ever fell from your lips passed through lips profaned to the exercise of blasphemy, and you should have felt ere this moment arrived that you were a sinner guilty, condemned, lost, ready to perish, you are now in a condition to come to Christ for mercy before the service closes. Your prayer should be, "Lord save me," and your application should be now under the strong impression of conscious guilt, and your dependence should be exclusive. You, O man, have as great a warrant to expect mercy and eternal life as the most eminent saint that ever walked in fellowship with God and glorified him with his body, soul, and spirit. And when, my brethren, this act is performed, when, that is, a sinner, with a full impression of his guilt and unworthiness, comes to Jesus Christ, penitent, broken-hearted, relying on his promise for mercy and eternal life, expecting that promise to be fulfilled, something is done which is felt to be of importance on account of its immediate and continued influence over the state of the heart. Coming into contact either accidentally or designedly with friends or even with strangers, sometimes leads to results very unanticipated and of vast importance. Many a fine character has been ruined by passing an evening amongst strangers. Many a young man has left his home, comparatively innocent, to take a solitary walk, either in the country or along the crowded streets of this city, without any design to form an intimacy, and under no impression that he shall return home different in taste or in desire to what he was when he left it, and yet having left home comparatively pure, he has gone back corrupted. An accidental association with a fascinating stranger, a designed interview with an old friend who has become corrupt, his moral corruption not previously known except to himself, has led to the destruction of a fine social reputation, to health, to peace, and, alas! to ruin for ever and ever. But, my brethren, no intimacy which is ever formed by accident or design, is ever known to produce such a singular effect upon the human character, both the interior and external development of that character, as a coming to Jesus Christ to be saved. What a wonderful effect it has! What a singular effect was produced,



my brethren, upon the exterior of the man who was placed at the feet of Jesus, to whom Jesus said, in the first instance, "Thy sins are forgiven thee;" and after that, "Take up thy bed and walk." The man was borne there a paralytic, under the sentence of divine condemnation; he walked away in the possession of health and strength, a pardoned sinner, feeling a full consciousness that his sins were forgiven him at the moment the Savior spoke. Here was an effect. It was not a fanciful impression. No; nor, my brethren, is that a fanciful impression which is produced upon the heart of the sinner, when he comes to Jesus Christ to be saved. Fanciful illusion! The burden of his guilt is removed; the disquietude of an uneasy conscience is allayed; the virulence of decayed passions is quelled; the fearful apprehension of coming woe passes away; there is peace in exchange for guilt; there is tranquillity in exchange for disquietude; there is the hope of immortality and eternal life for the fearfulness of coming destruction. And I appeal to you, who are as qualified to judge in this question as myself, whether these efforts do not follow, either instantaneously or gradually, a coming to Jesus Christ to be saved from wrath to come? And not only, brethren, are these effects produced on the interior state of the man, but there are other effects manifested in his exterior conduct. What makes the drunkard sober? What is it that induces the Sabbath-breaker to keep holy the day of rest? What is it that converts the blasphemer into an attendant at prayer meetings, who offers up his supplications and thanksgivings in a simple, concise, and appropriate style of speech? What is it that causes the old things of evil to pass away, and makes all things to become new? Here is the secret of the mystery: it is coming to Jesus Christ, believing in Jesus Christ. Hence the effects following this application decide that something is done which is felt to be extraordinary. And not only so, it is felt to be satisfactory. There are many of the transactions in which human nature is engaged, which entail a vast amount of regret. Sometimes the regret is unfeeling, and continues through life; and where, my brethren, there is no pungent regret, there is often much uncasiness. A thing is done that is not felt to be satisfactory after it is done; it requires revision and re-adjustment, even if it entail no lasting and painful regret. But these remarks do not apply, in the slightest degree, to an application to Jesus Christ for acceptance and eternal life. When the application is made, and when the result is known, I appeal to you, my Christian brethren, if there be not the highest degree of satisfaction felt? You feel that something is done, and you are satisfied that something is done; you never want it revised or undone. The mind feels at ease, and rises at times to transport.

The eye is suffused with tears of gratitude, and the whole soul seems to bound away before the hour of her actual departure, to have impressed upon her imagination that grand and sublime scene, when mortality will be swallowed up in life, and eternal bliss will be in actual possession. And, allow me to say, my brethren, in connection with the result of an application to Jesus Christ, that not only is there a high degree of satisfaction, but this satisfaction is never, never disturbed, nor is there the slightest, faintest wish to have this one great occurrence of our life ever broken up and destroyed. There is a beautiful expression of the apostle on this point, which is illustrated by the practical experience of every believer in Jesus Christ. "To whom coming" — not only "come" to Jesus Christ to be saved, but "to whom coming," indicating, what is in fact experienced, that there is a ceaseless intercourse subsisting between a saved sinner and an Almighty Savior. "To whom coming," for a fresh application of his pardoning mercy and cleansing blood, when the imagination and the heart are defiled by contact with the world; "to whom coming" for fresh mental and spiritual intercourse with him, who is the fountain of life and joy, and the rejoicing of the heart of all who trust and hope in him; "coming" to have reiterated assurances of protection; "coming" to have enlarged manifestations of his love. And, O brethren, when the last period of mortality arrives, how sacred, how transporting, how full of ineffable delight are the spiritual communings of the soul with Jesus Christ. A friend of mine, who for a series of years had trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation, who had enjoyed a large share of peace, and whose mind possessed the highest degrees of assurance of future happiness, when within a few minutes of her departure, said to her husband, who stood weeping by her side, "My dear, once more kneel down and let us hold fellowship with the Savior together." He knelt and prayed; he prayed with difficulty. He commended the spirit of his beloved wife to the care of the Lord Jesus, while passing through the dark valley of the shadow of death; and he arose, and there sat his wife, with an inimitable smile upon her countenance, and she said, "I have through life at times enjoyed the presence of Jesus, but never, never, never till this moment, did I feel what the bliss of communion with him is." She smiled again; her head fell, and she entered into rest. "To whom coming," till at length he comes and takes the soul to himself that confides in him for eternal life.

II. But now, my brethren, I have to call your attention to a most melancholy part of the subject, for melancholy it certainly is. It is a part of the subject which I should very much like to omit altogether,

and which I certainly would omit if I were not constrained by a sense of duty, and by a regard for the spiritual interest of those among you who are yet living without Christ in the world, to press it upon your notice. The melancholy part of my subject is, that although eternal life is made dependent on an application to Jesus Christ, many, the majority, the overwhelming majority of those who hear of Christ — (am I warranted in saying, the majority in this congregation?) will not come to him that they may have life. Perhaps if I were to adopt this last supposition I should exceed the bounds of truth. I never like to be extravagant, and therefore I will suppose that the overwhelming majority of this congregation have come to Christ, and are safe. [There is nothing, then, my brethren, which you have to fear; you have every thing to hope for.] Nay, I will go beyond the overwhelming majority; I will suppose that there are only ten persons in this chapel to-night who have not come to Christ for salvation. If only ten, what an ecstasy of bliss should we feel that there are only ten — *only ten* — in this congregation yet unpardoned and unsaved! Did I say what an ecstasy of bliss? What a torturing agony of soul ought we to feel if there *are* ten yet under sentence of condemnation! Who are they that constitute the ten in this congregation, yet under sentence of eternal condemnation? O man! is it thy wife? O woman! is it thine husband? O father! is it thy child? O brother! is it thy sister? If either of these relative associations have brought to your recollection one who may be supposed to form part of this given number, let your prayer now, whilst I am in the act of addressing you, be, “Lord, grant that my wife, my husband, my father, my brother, my son, my daughter, may receive impressions that shall force them to come to Christ for salvation.” “Ye will not come to Christ that ye might have life.” Now, this is a fact that no one can dispute. There are various reasons to be assigned for it. Some are much too proud to come to Jesus Christ to be saved. There is nothing more offensive to the pride of a man of intellect, to a man of high social virtue, to a man who has formed something like a classic taste for Christianity, to a man who is encompassed with the charm of superstitious impressions and associations, than to be told that he must come to Jesus Christ with the same spirit and the same feelings, and must utter the same language as publicans and harlots and sinners of the most offensive and obnoxious character. It is this that offends the pride of man. He will not do it. No, he will not do it: and perhaps this may be the case with some of you. You are too proud, too haughty, you have too high a sense of your own moral dignity, to perform such a humiliating act as that of coming to Jesus Christ,



breathing the language of the publican, and saying, "Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me." This is one reason; and, my brethren, the truth is, that the social virtues of some people do more to secure their eternal damnation, than do the vices of others. Ah! many a man continues unsaved because he thinks himself too good to be lost. The social virtues lead sinners on to hell by blinding them to that sentence of condemnation which God has pronounced against them for sins committed against himself. And hence the righteous are lost, whilst the wicked, by being brought to penitence and to Christ, are saved. It is for you to decide, who have not yet come to Christ, whether it is the pride of intellect, or the pride of social virtue that keeps you away. It matters not what it is — the issue will be the same. If you do not come you will be lost, and that for ever.

But sometimes persons assign as a reason why they do not come to Jesus Christ, that they cannot come. They reason in this manner. "I cannot believe; I cannot apply to Jesus Christ in the right way: I cannot repose confidence in him that shall secure salvation to my soul; all this requires divine assistance, and I have it not." Then wait. What will you get? My friend, this is nothing but an ingenious device, not in your favor, as human nature generally acts, but against your own interest. It is employing the art and contrivance to render the loss of your soul more certain than it would be, by continuing in a course of open profligacy; it is becoming ingenious to render your damnation awfully certain; it is offering, my brother, an insult to the very first principles of our fallen nature, which teach us that self-preservation is the grand law by which human nature is every where governed; it is setting this grand law at positive defiance, not to entail misery on others, but to entail eternal misery on yourself. I remarked, my brethren, and I think the remark is a just one, that the incidents which occurred in the history of our Lord's life, are not only so many facts which demonstrate his power and his compassion, but facts which also embody the great principles of his mediatorial administration. To illustrate this, allow me to appeal to another interesting incident in his history. There stood in his presence a man with a withered arm; his hand hung by his side. There he stood; it was enough for him to stand there. His useless arm bespoke the compassion of the Redeemer. And what did the Redeemer do, or rather, what did he say? "Stretch forth thy hand." Now suppose that man had acted as you have; suppose he had said, "How can I stretch forth my withered arm? I cannot use it — the use of the muscles is gone. I have no power; give me power, and then I will move. Perform an act, and then I will obey the command. Till that is done, I



will do nothing." If the man had talked like this, had he lived until this time, his arm would have been hanging by his side, as when he first appeared in the presence of his Redeemer. But no, that man acted upon the principle of self-preservation, which is, in fact, the principle of self-interest. He made an effort; he stretched forth his hand and it was healed. Here we see the principle on which the Son of God acts. We are not only invited but commanded to come to him, and when the command is obeyed, the result is secure. "Come unto me," says Christ, "and be ye saved;" but men will not come, and though the reasons why they will not may vary, the issue is precisely the same. And I would say that this refusal to come to Jesus Christ and be saved, is an act so extraordinary that I hardly know how to account for it. It strikes me as something very singular that human nature does not feel a deep and an overpowering interest in making preparation against a future and a changeless state of existence. How is it, my friends, you think of to-morrow? The child at school carries on his imagination to a period when he shall go to a business or profession. The youth, in passing through the early stages of preparation, carries his mind forward to a time when he shall breathe the air of liberty, and become a master in his own person. The young tradesman, who meets with difficulties and discouragements, passes on to a future stage of existence, anticipates the hour when he shall rise above all which now oppresses, and perchance, as he revels amid the creations of his own fancy, imagines that he shall sit beneath his own vine and his own fig-tree in the eventide of his life, there to enjoy the reward of his early exertions and labors. And who condemns man for this?

"Man never is, but always to be blest."

He passes from the present hour to the future, but unhappily bounds his anticipations within the narrow limits of time. It strikes me as marvellously singular that our nature does not pass the grand boundary into futurity, and feel a deep interest in the solution of this question, "What will become of me after life has been surrendered to the claims of death?"

Again, my brethren, when the sin of humanity, and consequent danger, is so palpable that it cannot be disputed, it strikes me as marvellously singular that man does not feel a deep interest in ascertaining how the sentence can be repealed and his condition changed. I presume that there are some present who have sometimes been at the Old Bailey and attended to the trials of the prisoners. Perhaps on a capital offence you heard the verdict of guilty pronounced and saw the poor felon led from the dock in possession of his life. But it is not

his own ; he lives now for another, and he lives only against the day of execution. His life he holds in trust, not for his own benefit but for the benefit of the injured and violated law of his sovereign. Now, suppose, after attending such a trial as this, after hearing the verdict and seeing the poor man led back to his cell, after waiting the day of execution, hearing the solemn bell toll — the culprit on the platform, his arms tied behind him, the executioner of death busy in performing his official duties, just stepping back to draw the fatal bolt, standing by the side of the sovereign of the empire — suppose you should turn round and ask this question, “ Why is that poor unhappy man permitted to die ? ” and the sovereign should say, because he will not ask for pardon — that is the reason. Had he done it, he would have lived ; had he done it, I would have repealed the sentence ; had he done it, the execution now just about to take place would never have been witnessed. I have sent to him, I have entreated him, I have urged him, I have promised to restore his life to his possession, and I have promised even to confer superior favors upon him, but no, he chooses death rather than life. What would you say ? The bolt is drawn — the drop falls — there he struggles ; — what would you say ? The man was not only guilty of imbruing his hands in his brother's blood, but he was also guilty of imbruing them in his own, because he would not ask his sovereign to save that life which he had forfeited. He was, therefore, a double murderer, first, for slaying his brother, and secondly, for slaying himself. He dies and he incurs an awful amount of guilt by not asking for the life which was forfeited. And I appeal to you, my brethren, if your condition is not exactly analogous, though attended with more awful and appalling circumstances than those with which my imagination has invested this never witnessed scene. Your life is forfeited to the violated laws of your supreme sovereign. Mercy is offered to you : you are commanded to come and accept it. But no — you will not come to Jesus Christ that you might have life. You choose to perish rather than to pray. You choose to live in sin and accumulate fresh guilt rather than to come to him to be saved, who came into the world to seek and to save them that are lost. And should this be your case, my brethren, allow me to say you will never forget your decision, nor will the result of that decision ever be forgiven. If you will not come to Jesus Christ for life, you will not have it. There is no intermediate condition between the possession of eternal happiness and the infliction of eternal woe. There is no midway where the human soul can exist alternately, partaking of an intermixture of good and of evil, of misery and of bliss, the one modifying and correcting the other ; for if you neglect this great salvation escape is

impossible. Nor, my friends, is it necessary that you should summon up your soul deliberately to the determination, "I will not come." You may not come without deciding by any formal act that you will not. I wish you would brace up your mind to firmness here. Come to the decision, "I will not come to Christ to be saved." Follow my advice when you go home. Have you an album? Write in it, "I will not come to Christ to be saved." If you have not this fashionable depository of what is pleasing or striking, get a piece of paper that will withstand the mouldering influence of time and write on it, "Date, the 12th of September, 1841, — I will not come to Christ to be saved." Sign your name. Do it — do it to-night, and then retire to rest. Make the experiment — be honest for once. Let your mind see itself and know your own decision. Practice deception on yourself no longer. Courage! courage! courage, man! and then see whether the re-action of your own courage will not intimidate you. Try the experiment whether a firmness in evil will not even shake a determination to live under the awful spell and delusion. But it is not necessary that you should do this formally, though I would rather you would do so than live on as you have lived without coming to Christ, and without thinking about it. If you do not come the issue is certain — the loss of the soul. A few winters ago, in passing from my chapel to my own house, residing as I do three miles from it in the country, I rode along with the coachman, he had not his lamps, the night was excessively dark, and I looked and could see nothing, all was gloom. I arrived at home in safety, I had my supper; my family knelt at the altar of devotion, and I retired to rest; I fell asleep. It will not surprise you to hear, my brethren, that my imagination retained somewhat of the impressions I received in passing through this palpable darkness. I dreamt that I was in the dark valley of the shadow of death, and I dreamt that I was there alone. I saw no object to affright me, I heard no sound to appall me, but I was alone; I was alone in a strange place; I was alone, and the strangeness of the place, its awful stillness awoke me, and tears of joy fell from my eyes to think it was only a dream, nothing more than a dream. O, man, to you, dying without coming to Christ for salvation, it will be a reality, not of stillness, not of unbroken quietude — O no! hell from beneath will move to meet you at your coming. The lost soul will sink for ever and forever among lost spirits and devils. To you it will be a reality, and this issue as it will be a reality, so it will not be forgiven. "Think not," says Jesus Christ at the close of this chapter, "that I will accuse you." No, it will not be necessary for Jesus Christ to accuse

you on your passing into the eternal world. If you die under the sentence of condemnation, and are lost, you will accuse yourself.

I was engaged the other evening in conducting a religious service at West Bromwich ; it was on Tuesday evening. The minister of the place, just before the service commenced, said, " Last Sabbath morning, sir, in that pew sat one of my hearers, looking unusually well ; but he is dead, sir ; he died this morning, suddenly." Ah, my friends, as you have never died, you think that you never shall. If you had experienced this great event, and were permitted to step back into life to correct the errors of which you have been guilty, you would learn wisdom from experience. But no, death has never come, and therefore you think it is yet at a remote distance. This may be the last Sabbath you will ever live, the last service you may ever attend, the last appeal you may ever hear. You may go home, and ere tomorrow you may be in eternity. And if it should be the case, will you forget this scene ? If it should be the case, will you ever forgive yourself ? Will you not have to reproach yourself forever and ever ? Suppose, my friends, excuse the extravagance of the conception, suppose you had existed before you came into being, and suppose that you then had permission to elect the condition in which you should exist, and suppose that, owing either to a want of reflection or to your not taking the advice of wisdom, you had elected a condition of degradation and of wretchedness, so that you had lived all through life a poor instead of a rich man, a man in sickness, instead of a man in health, would you ever have forgiven yourself ? Would you not from the dawn of reason to the close of life, have reproached yourself with having made such a choice, instead of taking the advice of wisdom ? Yes, you would have said, " It is my own fault, I elected the condition of existence ; I have what I chose." It is an awful choice indeed, your own life or death for ever is now placed before you — decide, decide, my friend — decision is your own act. Make a wrong choice, you will not only never forget it, you will never forgive it. And for a man to sin against himself, to place himself in a condition where the exercise of mercy on himself is absolutely impossible, will be to give an additional pang to every sensation of remorse, and a keener despair in a condition from which nothing will ever be able to release him. O that the God of all grace may breathe upon your spirits to-night, for the Redeemer's sake, Amen.



## SERMON XXVI.

THE WISDOM OF WINNING SOULS.

BY REV. JAMES SHERMAN.

“He that winneth souls is wise.” — PROVERBS xi. 30.

BEHOLD, teachers, your work! It is to “win souls.” Behold the encomium put upon that work! “He that winneth souls is wise.” And this is an encomium, pronounced by lips which cannot err, and by one who never flatters.

You are some of the representatives of the schools of Britain, which contain within their number more than two millions of these souls. To you is entrusted their religious training, the formation of their characters, their habits, and their hopes. Oh! how responsible — how tremendously responsible is the position, which some persons occupy! The eyes of the church are directed to you, as instruments of pouring new blood into it, when it is exhausted — of planting young trees, from your nurseries, in the vineyard of the Church. The eyes of the Church are upon you, to bring about such a state of things, in the coming generation, as shall introduce the millennium, and make the earth once more God’s paradise. And if you are faithful to your trust, God shall honor you with this exalted result — “He that winneth souls is wise.”

The timid and the fearful may, therefore, be greatly encouraged in their work, by this statement; and I hope I may hereafter be able, in the course of this sermon, to show, that although they may not now see the wisdom or fruit of their exertions, God shall show both, by-and-by.

Brethren, the times indicate a remarkable fulfilment of that prophecy — “Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” Science and literature never had so many patrons, as they have now; real religion never had so many friends, as she has now, notwithstanding the declensions visible in some churches, and in some individuals. Everything seems progressing, with remarkable rapidity, to a crisis or conclusion, of a remarkable character. And those are wise, in Scripture estimation, who aid this great progression, as it is going forward.

He who helps others, by schemes and inventions, to grow wealthy, is reckoned wise in his generation; he who first made a locomotive

engine, and brought railways to perfection, to accelerate our speed, from one place or country to another, was thought wise in his generation; he who imparts learning to youth, to fit them for usefulness to man, and for holding important situations in the government, is justly honored as wise; he who heals disease, restores health, and prolongs life to individuals, is sought after, as one who is wise; and the individual, who lives for the purpose of restoring that to a sorrowing suitor, which fraud has taken away from him, is estimated by the man, when he puts his foot on, as he thought, his once forfeited estate, as one of the wisest men in the world for him.

Now all these things are united in your own characteristic. Your object and your labor, if you understand it aright, is to win the soul. You are to teach that soul how to grow rich; your invention is to be taxed, to accelerate it in its speed from earth to heaven; you are to instruct it, in the great, wondrous, and almighty science of salvation; you are to administer gospel remedies, to heal its moral maladies, and to prolong its joyful days; and you are to restore it to "an inheritance," that is "incorruptible, and undefiled, and fadeth not away, which it hath lost, and to carry the case from court to court, till you see that soul settled in Canaan for ever. O God, what wisdom, what grace, what zeal, and what help from thee, does such a work as this require! He, my brethren, is no teacher, who does not aim at this; he does not deserve the name of a teacher.

Teachers, I want you not to aim at anything new; neither shall I, in the address, which I am about to deliver to you,—but shall simply endeavor to put you in remembrance of the great things, which you have in hand, and the great duties, which you have to perform. Pray for me, and pray for yourselves, that your reward and your work may both vividly appear before you.

I shall therefore ask your attention, first, to the subjects, about whom you are to be unspeakably interested: "souls," human souls, young souls. Secondly, I am to point out to you the manner in which that interest is to be expressed; you are to endeavor to "win souls." And then, thirdly, I will endeavor to place before you the estimate which God puts upon all efforts, thus exercised, for the accomplishment of this purpose: "He that winneth souls is wise."

I. First, let us look at the subjects, about whom you are to be unspeakably interested. They are "souls."

Let us now look at what a soul is, in three aspects.

1. Let us now look at it, first, in its structure. It is a living thing, distinct and separate from the body. Matter is wholly passive ; it cannot act, or move, or think, without this vital spirit. "The body, without the spirit, is dead." Take mere matter, compound it, alter it, and divide it, as you will, yet you cannot make it see, or hear, or feel, or think rationally. But though the soul acts with the body, it is distinct from the body ; for Dives was in hell, while his body was carried, in state and pomp, in the funeral ; Lazarus was resting in Abraham's bosom, while the poor, wretched carcase was cast out to the dogs, who had formerly "licked his sores ;" the penitent thief was with Christ in paradise, while his body was suspended on the cross ; and this has been, and will be, the comfort of the saints, as long as the earth lasts, that when they are "absent from the body," they are "present with the Lord."

The human soul is spiritual and immaterial ; it is not compounded, or made up of the most subtle matter ; it cannot be touched, or handled, or divided, as bodies can. "Handle me and see," said Christ, "for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have."

It is immortal, and cannot be destroyed ; it has no seeds of death within it, as our bodies have. Corruption, it is true, afflicts the soul, spoils its beauty, and damages its powers ; but it cannot reduce it to its original nothing. A soul has a beginning, but no end — a birthday, but no dying day.

Its powers and capabilities are some of the most wonderful things, which ever could engage our imagination. Why, what can a soul do ? It can ascertain the relative size, nature, and properties of all the wonders of creation — from the monad, several millions of which may be found in a single drop of water, to the behemoth, which destroys men and cattle, and the varied productions of the earth ; it can mount up to heaven, and ascertain the motion of the planets, foretell the eclipses of the sun and moon to a second of time, count the stars, and discern the system, by which they are governed : it can invent the most ingenious and useful productions, for the service of man, and even for the destruction of its own species ; it can penetrate the secrets of hidden nature, and abstract from the bowels of the earth the greatest riches and wonders ; it can trace, survey, and enjoy the beauties, the wonders, and the glories of redeeming love ; it can hold fellowship with the Deity, as a man holds fellowship with his friend ; it can revolutionize the feelings, and hopes, and joys of myriads of individuals, and turn the world upside down, in its tendencies, and in its actions ; it can make the men, who by vice have become like demons, by its agencies and instructions, act like the sons of God, and the friends of

heaven ; and above all this, it is capable of an immediate vision from Almighty God, of living in the presence of God, and of serving him in his temple, for ever and ever.

A man's soul is his all. Take this from him, and he is but a lifeless, and soon becomes a formless mass of corruption itself. Or let its powers be deranged, so that he is an idiot or a lunatic ; and what is the man then ? Nay, only derange its comforts, and let anxiety prey upon the spirit ; and what is he then ? His soul, in its powers and its influences, is his all — the chief part, the honor, the dignity, and the glory of man.

Now this is the object, about which you are to be interested. Is it not worthy of your interest ?

2. And come from a view of its structure, to view it, secondly, in its lost estate. Our Savior says, that this soul is lost. "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ?" Then it is capable of being lost ; and if it continue in its present state, it is lost." "The Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost." Hence he describes himself under the figure of a shepherd, going over the mountains, seeking for a lost sheep, and rejoicing when he has recovered his sheep.

Originally, mark, this soul was a pure spirit ; it was created in the perfect image, and living likeness of its Creator, "in righteousness and true holiness ;" but now it has lost this holiness, and has nothing but impurity. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies : these are the things which defile a man." It has lost its innocence, and now has nothing but impurity. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies : these are the things which defile a man." It has lost its innocence, and now has nothing but guilt ; for "all the world is condemned before God." It has lost its wisdom, and now has nothing but ignorance ; "being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in it." It has lost its communion, and has now nothing but distance ; "far from God, by wicked works." It has lost its comfort, and has now nothing but fear ; "my flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments." It has lost its paradise, and has now nothing to look forward to, but hell ; for "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

And here let no teacher say, "These passages and applications may do very well for adults, but what have they to do with children ?" Thus much have they to do with children : "Death hath reigned over all, even those who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's



transgression." And see the evil passions of children ; see, almost as soon as they can talk and walk, what proof they give you of their having lost souls ! I undertake not to tell you, (and perhaps you will not require me,) when the responsibility of a child commences ; that is a question with which we have nothing whatever to do ; God will settle it with you, and with the world, by-and-by ; it is no part of your work ; therefore leave it entirely with him. You have proofs that they have lost the image and likeness of God ; and that is the great thing which you have to bear in mind.

Now behold, in the entire school to which you belong, there are five hundred lost souls to excite your sympathy ; souls, which if they be not regenerated and pardoned, must perish for ever ; souls, once the temples of God, but now in ruins — once decorated over with all the emblems of righteousness and glory, but now defaced and dishonored ; souls, which have not lost a single fragment of their powers, though those powers are deranged, and therefore lost to the original intention of their creation. And what was that ? To serve and please God. To this great end they are lost ; " they are all gone out of the way ; there is none that doeth good, no, not one ; " " I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Can a heart take a glance over a school, feeling this great fact, and not compassionate the case of a soul ?

3. Then, thirdly, take another view of these subjects ; look at them as capable of being recovered. Blessed be God, a lost soul is not past recovery, while it remains upon the earth. That child, which is so wayward ; and gives you so much trouble — that boy, about whom your anxieties are excited, and who seems to be fast arriving at manhood, and developing all the powers of his mind, more like a devil than a man,— is not hopelessly lost. Oh ! the comfort of this thought !

Let us ask the question — " Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God ? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old ? will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil ? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul ? " No ; this is too low a price for the soul, to restore it. " We are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold," of which there is abundance in the earth. No, that is not enough : God's justice cannot be satisfied with a bribe ; his law must be vindicated, his righteousness acknowledged, and his attributes, in their glory, proclaimed throughout all worlds ; and therefore the scheme of redemption is his own.

I am afraid we get into the habit of repeating passages to the chil-

dren, and to ourselves, and hearing them from the pulpit so often, till we forget their value and their sweetness. Now strive, teachers, to enter into this passage, and to feel its force to-night: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here the claims of justice are not sacrificed at the shrine of mercy, and here the cries of mercy are not powerless at the shrine of justice; "mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace embrace each other." "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." And what then? "We joy in God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, by whom we have received the atonement."

How, then, is a soul saved? By believing in, relying on, and accepting this atonement — by having it so presented and so applied, that it shall welcome it, as a remedy to his own state. Not making an atonement; (never teach your children that) — that is done for ever, and done completely. All the child has to do as well as yourself, is, to receive what God has provided, and accept the remedy, which his mercy has prepared; and after he has received the one, and accepted the other, he loves the atonement, delights in it, is pleased with it, and instrumentally strives to save and to bless others, as he himself has been saved and blessed. And when the race is run, heaven is regained, and the soul enters into it, to live with God, who has thus saved it, for ever and ever.

Teachers, your work is, to present that atonement. God forgive you, if you do not do it, or if you put it into the background, in any way! This is the good news, the glad tidings, which fills the souls of men with hope and joy — that "Christ Jesus came into the world, to save sinners." Give it, in its fulness and freeness, to the children; talk about it to them, till you feel your own hearts glowing with love to Him who accomplished it, — and then you warm others, with the very warmth of your own, as you sensibly enjoy it.

Teachers, this is your work — to try to win this soul; to set before it that remedy, and to win that soul to accept and rejoice in that Savior. Do you not think you are greatly honored?

II. But I now pass to the second part of my discourse, and will endeavor to show you the efforts which you are to make for these subjects. "He that *winneth* souls is wise."

Let us now apply this "winning," both to the manner and to the result.

1. Let us look at it, first, as to the manner, in which we are to win these souls. To "win" suggests something more than mere labor.

To "win," a thing, implies the exercise of ingenuity, as those who win at a game of play; a certain power, as those who win by conquest; an adaptation of the best means suited to the object, as those who win compliance by persuasion; an indomitable perseverance, as those who will never give up a conquest, till they have obtained the victory; and a rule and order, by which you are to proceed, as legal and prescribed, in order that you may win the crown, that is set before you — "for a man is not crowned, unless he strive lawfully." So, then, you are to win.

And if you will do this aright, the first thing you have to do, in order to win their souls, is to win their attention. Ingenuity may honorably tax itself here. Your voice, your manner, your habits, if you would be good teachers, must all be adapted to win. If your voice is not good, you must aim, as Demosthenes did, to make it better; who went to the sea-shore, while the winds were roaring and raging, and recited his themes there, with pebbles in his mouth, to cure his impediments. If your habits are rough or uncourteous, you must mend them, if you would be good teachers. If your manner of teaching is not that which impresses your own mind, as best adapted to impress the mind, and catch the heart of a child, that manner must be improved, from good patterns, which are presented to you. Do not look at these patterns with an evil eye, and with jealousy, but stoop to imitate, wherever they are good and excellent, and you shall find the advantage of them.

Children are not stones or ciphers; they are naturally lively. We always think there is something the matter with children, when they sit down by themselves all day, and do not open their mouths and prattle to those around them. Who would wish a child's tongue to be still, or its limbs to be fixed? And therefore instruction, to win, must be adapted to their habits. Dull, cold, prosy, long lectures to a child! Why, teachers, if you attempt this mode, half your time in your class will be taken up by telling the children to sit still, not to be fidgety, and not to move about. They cannot help it; you are lulling them into this very state, by your dry manner.

Oh! sirs, there is much tact, as well as learning, required to win the attention, especially of a child. Go to an Infant School, and see the methods adopted there. What little child, that can walk, feels weary? Everything is adapted to its capacities; its attention is kept awake, and it learns lessons, and has precepts, and psalms, and hymns there impressed upon its memory, which teaching by no other means can accomplish. I am not saying this as exactly adapted to Sunday School instruction; but this mode must be the most useful, for it is the



first which David prescribes: "Come, ye children, hearken to me." Get their attention, and you are in a ready way to get their souls; win their ears, and it is one of the doorways into their hearts.

Then, secondly, in order to apply this, as to the manner, you must win their affections, as well as their attention. Love does wonders. If you gain the heart, you have, naturally enough, the key to the understanding. A teacher is not likely to win a soul, whose love he does not win. Do you ever write a senior scholar letters, and letters in good English, well spelt, and not badly written? Letters remain. A child has a letter — a postman comes to the door, with a letter for Master Johnson, or John Thomas, or Sarah Speedwell, from the teacher; oh! the little document is treasured up by the child, as something particularly precious; and it is its own. How the news goes through the house directly — 'I have got a letter from my teacher;' and it is read, and read, and read again, till the sentiments contained there find their way to that child's heart. It shows the child that there is one interested in its everlasting blessedness. Ah! when they can say, 'See what an interest my teacher takes in me!' You know what the effect would be upon yourselves. There is some one of your friends takes a particular interest in you; and what is the consequence? A corresponding feeling in your own heart, a natural going forth of your heart towards that individual. Would you, then, gain the souls of children? You must win their affections.

And then, in the next place, you must win their judgment. Your office is to teach them spiritual things, — how they may be pardoned, regenerated, sanctified, and saved. You must endeavor, then, to win their approval of these blessings, by showing them their guilt and danger, and their destruction without them; and for this purpose, you must ransack the Scripture of all its similes, its stories, its illustrations of the true effects of their fall, and make them all contribute to your help. Then place before them the necessity of Christ's sacrifice, its merit, and its blessedness — that it has appeased wrath, and satisfied justice on their behalf; and the love of Christ and the Spirit, as ready to save them. Faith will yield, if they do but embrace these things. And do not be inclined to think, when a child sometimes seems dull, as you are stating these truths, that your labor is lost: impressions are often made, when least suspected, and revived after certain seasons, when it was supposed they were long since buried.

Then, fourthly, win their confidence. If a child can say, by seeing the habits of the teacher, 'My teacher wants to do me good,' the impression of that child will naturally lead to confidence in that teacher. It is said of Mr. Whitefield, that individuals went to hear



him preach, who were careless about the doctrines which he preached ; but every one that went to hear him seemed to go away with the impression — That man wants to do me good. Display the exercise of authority, and it will not teach the children to comply ; but only let them know, that you pray and watch over them, and delight in the work, and that it will be a happiness and an honor to see them saved with yourselves, and God shall crown these efforts. It will be the readiest way to win their souls.

Oh ! what an opening this gives to win them ! They are easily led, by those in whom they confide ; just as we are, if we have confidence in our friends' wisdom or kindness. They may say anything to us, and it is almost an oracle to us ; we are led on almost by what they say. And children of larger growth feel this effect unconsciously.

Fifthly, if you would win their souls, you must win their habits. I do not know whether you have been as much impressed, as the preacher has been, with the word which Solomon uses, with respect to instruction : “ *Train* up a child in the way he should go.” Not only instruct a child, because an officer in the army may instruct a recruit to no purpose ; but training that recruit is drilling him to habits of exercise. Now this is the difference.

It is very hard work to enforce those habits, which are proper for children ; for as soon as they leave you, where, perhaps, they have only two hours' instruction, on a Sunday afternoon, they probably go home to their wicked parents and friends, and the impression of the Sabbath's instruction is soon swept away. And how little power the Sunday School Teacher has, in the time which is allotted for instruction, if he use even the best means in his power, to train these minds into proper and suitable habits !

Yet you must aim constantly, at training them to habits of obedience to yourself, and of obedience and regard to parents ; and repeatedly must these be insisted upon. Train them to a fondness for God's house, or places where they hear the truths of the gospel delivered ; train them to forethought, and to prudence in their general habits, and to economy in life. I think that in the South, we are very much behind the North, in some societies which they have, arising, probably, from children being there, in factories, in much larger numbers than we can find them in London or its suburbs. Among them, little societies, of various kinds, are established ; such, for instance, as a little subscription for funerals, for so much to be allowed them a week, when they are sick, or for so much to be given, when one of them dies. And this breeds a social disposition among the children, and takes away a great portion of that selfishness, which

exists in a very large proportion in all our hearts, and teaches them to care for one another, as well as provide for themselves, to a very great extent.

Habits of this kind have, I think, a wonderful effect upon their minds, as they grow up in life ; the children perceive the temporal, as well as the spiritual interest, which the teacher took in them, while he was among them. And just now, when societies are rising up almost everywhere, one would be delighted to see a society for the promotion of provident habits in children. I hope the teachers will endeavor to inculcate the habits I have mentioned on their children, if they would effectually win souls.

2. But I have been too long upon this portion of my subject. I said, however, I would look at it in another aspect ; and that is, the result of winning a soul.

A soul won, is won for Christ. It is a reward for his toil ; it is a fruit of the application of his redemption. He

“————— looks down and sees  
The purchase of his agonies.”

Formerly, it belonged to Satan, and was guided and ruled by him ; but now it is Christ's, and now it loves its master, and does his work. Oh ! how the master rejoices when the first tear of sincere repentance falls from their eyes ! “ There is joy in the presence of the angels of God,” (that is, Christ rejoicing, while the angels surround him,) “ over one sinner, that repenteth.” Every soul won, then, is an addition to Christ's friends, and a loss, of course, to the kingdom of Satan. Who that loves Christ, would not aim at this ?

Again ; a soul won, is won for the church. The church is a body of believers, who meet to worship their Lord, to imitate his conduct and example, and to uphold his kingdom in the world. A soul, formerly full of cursing, or bitterness, or indifference, or irreligion, now full of praise to his divine master ; a spirit, previously “ earthly, sensual, devilish,” now “ set on things which are above ” — his habits sinful, now righteous — once “ darkness,” now “ light in the Lord ” — once far from God, now “ brought nigh, by the blood of Christ ” — once, a “ stranger and a foreigner,” now a “ fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God ” — now, perhaps, teaches in the same school with you. Now he walks with God, and the church has gained a friend, when the soul is won. Oh ! glorious object !

A soul won, is won for the world. Why, when a child is converted, it is like taking a handful of salt, and casting it into the world, to pre-

serve it from putrefaction ; it is like setting up a new lighthouse, on a dangerous shore, to warn mariners to keep off ; it is like " a city set upon a hill, which cannot be hid," that others may gaze upon it ; it is like dew, falling from heaven, in the midst of many people, to bless them, and make them happy ; it is a peace-maker, cast among the wranglers and contentionists of the world ; it is a guide, for wanderers to the celestial city ; it is a watchman, to warn men away from the danger, which is hurrying them to perdition, and to give them notice of the fires of wrath to come, which are to devour the Lord's adversaries ; it is a winner of souls to God. You yourselves have won him, and out he goes into the world, to win others.

Again : a soul won, is won for yourself. Is not this a rich reward for the nights you have sat up, for the candles you have burnt, for the sleep you have lost, for the recreation you have given up, to study God's book, and to prepare yourself in order that you might infuse good principles into that mind ? Will it not be a blessed reward, when they are gathered to Christ ? " Ye are our glory and our joy," says the apostle ; and he says elsewhere — " Ye are our crown of rejoicing, in the day of the Lord." Yes, and Jesus Christ counts those precious souls, that honor him, worthy of better honor — those who are aiming at, and are successful in his blessed work. " They that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars, for ever and ever." When you, in robes of glory, present them in your Master's presence, and say — " Here am I, Lord, and the children whom thou hast given me," for whom I prayed, and toiled, and labored, and sacrificed, from love to thy precious self, who had saved my soul ; to see him smile upon you, and say, " Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," — they will be the words that will enter into your very soul, the joy of which you shall never lose, while eternity itself lasts.

III. And now I am brought to the third part of my discourse, upon which I must be very brief ; the estimate which God forms of such efforts for souls, " He that winneth souls is wise." And this term seems peculiarly appropriate to such efforts as these.

1. First, observe, that winning souls corresponds with the conduct of God himself. You are doing the very thing, which God himself is doing, when you are living for this purpose. God the Father is constantly engaged in this work of winning souls. All his providences, all his ordinances, all prosperous and all afflictive dispensations are intended to draw men to himself. " No man can come unto me, unless the Father, which hath sent me, draw him." God the Son, by the



preaching of his gospel, the exhibition of his work, and the influence of his love, is always at the same work. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." God the Spirit, by impressions, by convictions, and by instructions, aims perpetually at the same work. "Draw me; I will run after thee." "Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, to-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

Here is infinite wisdom engaged in winning souls, and having for its object, in all its plans and purposes, the winning of precious souls; and you, beloved, are coadjutors with God, and co-workers with the Deity, in winning souls. Behold how he strives, and bears with men, repeating his instructions to them, and giving them stroke upon stroke, to endeavor to recover their hearts, and win them back unto himself! Lo! you go forth with the same object. Oh! you are wise indeed, if you are a worker with him in this.

2. It furnishes these souls with real happiness and usefulness; and therefore they must be wise, that attempt it. "This is life eternal, to believe on thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Pardon, peace, joy, salvation, you are giving to those children — things which no wealth could buy, which nothing could compensate for the loss of, and which they must have or perish. By it they are brought into God's family: this is bliss. Why, you could do nothing more wise, as patriots, than to introduce men into happiness.

Tell me, my brethren, what happiness your soul has, when it once comes into this blessed state I have mentioned; when it knows that its sins are forgiven, when it comes into the presence of God, and enjoys the fellowship of God, your Savior. Is not this happiness? And suppose every child in a class, or in a Sunday school, throughout the world, were converted; suppose all the talents of these children were employed for the Savior, — how useful, as well as how happy, would the world be!

Conversion gives a child sympathy, power of utterance, new and well directed zeal, diligence, and devotion to his Master's interest. Then what a change would be produced in our world, if these little missionaries, thus converted by the faith of Christ, were to go forth, and, as in apostolic days, "enter into every house, teaching and preaching Jesus Christ!" This is what you have to do. Can you manifest greater wisdom? That must be wisdom indeed, which would bring them into such a state of advantage to themselves and to others.

3. Again: it ranks you with the wise and the good of all ages. It is here, that Satan labors to win souls, but not to win them to happiness and salvation; like the fowler, he endeavors to win them, to



destroy them. As the king of Sodom said to Abraham, after his return from the war, You take the goods, and let me have the persons ; you may have all the spoil of the war, but let me have the persons you have taken captive and I shall be satisfied ; so Satan says, You may take every thing but their souls. What they are, and however situated in the world, I care not ; only let me have their souls ; that is my object. You must be engaged, then, in opposition to all his purposes, in winning these souls from him.

All good and wise men have labored in the same way, before you. " Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied " to all the profligate sinners of his days, and told them that Christ was coming, to take vengeance on their sins. For a hundred and twenty years, Noah, though he had not a single convert, kept preaching righteousness to the people. Lot " vexed his righteous soul every day with the filthy conversation of the wicked." Elijah prayed and protested against the priests of Baal, and instructed the people in the way to heaven. Isaiah and the prophets labored, and gave their whole lives, to " turn many to righteousness." The seventy, by Christ's commands, went out, two and two, and beheld the devils subject to them, and the power of Satan destroyed, in the conversion of souls. The primitive Christians went every day into the temple, and into every house, teaching the people ; and they not only did this, but they had their representatives going every where, over all parts of the earth, telling men how to be saved. Paul, " from Jerusalem, round about, into Illyricum," did not fail to preach the gospel of Christ ; and when one good man, full of zeal and love, took a girdle, and bound him round, he said,— " What ! mean ye to weep and to break mine heart ? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus."

Now you are associated with this company ; God puts you among these dear people, who are thus striving to enlist souls in his army, to fight his battles. Never yet was there a good man, who did not aim to win souls. His religion is vain, who would keep these benefits wholly to himself ; it does not belong to the religion of Christ, and is not a part of " the wisdom that cometh from above." " The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom ;" and therefore, to make others fear him as well, shows much greater wisdom.

4. Again : it gains for you the present and future approbation of God ; and therefore is the manifestation of the truest wisdom. He was so pleased with Enoch, and he became such a proficient in his school, that he did not suffer him to pass through death, in the ordinary course, but transferred him from the lower form on earth, to the

upper form in heaven. He was so pleased with Elijah's zeal, that he exercised his miraculous agency, and made ravens feed him, rather than devour him. Stephen spake boldly of him before the Sanhedrim; and before he died, he opened heaven to him, and showed him Jesus standing at the right hand of God, ready to receive him. Did John go about saying, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" — "Little children, love one another;" and incorporating in these the spirit of love? John shall be taken to an island, all the purposes of Jehovah shall be opened to his vision, and he shall then see what God is soon to do upon the earth. Does Paul serve him? He shall be "caught up to the third heavens," and hear words which it was not lawful for him to repeat.

Do not expect miracles to be performed in your case, or displayed in your behalf; but believe it, teachers, that if you aim to win precious souls to God, he will manifest himself to you, as he does not, ordinarily, to the world. "To him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God."

Oh! the comforts of his love: are they not better than life? Oh! to have the seal of his Spirit in my heart, that I am his! Oh! to see that heaven is my own, and that when I die, I shall be with him, and "shall be like him!" To have this in one's spirit, what bliss does it not impart! And must not that be true wisdom, which will bring this to me, and seal it in my heart?

And by-and-by I shall stand before him: the whole world is to be at his bar. Who will he then single out? The people that have ministered to others, and have proved the truth of their religion by their actions. Lord, say they, when the repetition of their deeds is made, when did we this? We have forgotten it; they were such slight actions, that we thought but little of them. Oh! "inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my little ones, ye have done it unto me." And then, while he recognizes the act, to see those eyes beaming beauty and light, darting into my heart and my countenance, and the voice, in the tenderest and sweetest tones that ear ever heard, saying to me — "Come, thou blessed child of my Father, enter into the inheritance prepared for thee:"

"Come in, thou blessed; sit by me;  
With mine own blood I've ransom'd thee,  
Come, taste my perfect favor."

Oh! to hear that voice! Will it not be enough, Christian, will it not be enough, teacher, for you? God grant you may hear it: that you may live to prosecute your work effectually; and then you shall see,

that your teaching, both to others and to yourselves, has not been in vain.

But now what shall I say? I have already, I fear, exhausted your strength and patience; but I cannot part with you, without one word; it is to impress a thought, which I have already thrown out, the more upon your attention: prepare much for winning souls. Souls are not won by ignorance; ignorant teachers are not the individuals that God ordinarily employs to win souls. Some have winning manners, but shallow and uninstructed minds. Now if any of you have a class which you have brought on as far as you can, do not look black if the superintendent should one day come and say, It is time some of these dear children were removed from your class to another! That teacher has better qualifications, he knows, than yourself, for these great objects. I sympathize with you; I know the pang of parting with a child, after you have had that child sometime in your class; and yet your feelings are not to be your guide, but that child's salvation is to be your object; and whether John, or Thomas, or Peter, or Andrew is the best teacher to guide that child to heaven, let him have that teacher so that he is best instructed in his way thither.

My beloved, I fear that many of us want a great deal of instruction, yet, in the science of humility. Do you repeat that lesson once a-week to yourselves — "Let each esteem others better than himself?" That is the first round of the ladder; but a great many persons climb to the upper rounds, and fall down. Begin with that round and you are safe, and shall ascend, gently and surely, to the highest and most distinguished posts that teachers can enjoy.

Let me beseech all of you, then, as far as lies in your power, to labor to prepare the mind for instruction. Read the Bible with notes, and take all the means which are furnished you, for the purpose of aiding your instruction. Study well those cheap, well-prepared, and judicious notes, published by the Sunday School Union; and as most children learn the same lessons, take care that those notes, and particularly the practical reflections, with whatever other reflections occur to your own mind, after you have been with God in prayer, are thoroughly impressed upon your mind, so that you shall have them when you go to the class, ready for delivering; and you will find the benefit of it.

Then there is one thing, in order to this; and with that I close. Prayer must be always associated with your labor; prayer to get God's Spirit, — the spirit of love, tenderness, and sympathy, and forbearance, and zeal. If you are much with God, you cannot go among the children without communicating something of these feelings: and



they soon perceive it. You need not tell a child that you have been with God in prayer; persons belonging to a Christian Church have no reason to talk much about having communion with God. If they have, it is like ointment in their right hand; it is sure to betray itself. There is something in their manner and temper, that people tell, just as if a delicious ointment was rubbed on a man's hand, and he goes into a house, and endeavors to hide it; the smell of it spreads everywhere. And if this be the case with you, my Christian friends, you will show it to the children in your spirit and conduct, which they soon understand.

Be assured, teachers, from the Book of God, that Divine influence in teaching is every thing to you. You may use all means, and communicate all knowledge, but it will be in vain without this. Therefore, hear this last sentence — “It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” Get that, and you shall “win souls” to your blessed Master.

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## SERMON XXVII.

THE TRANSMISSION OF SCRIPTURAL TRUTH TO POSTERITY.

BY REV. J. BELCHER, D. D.

“I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old; which we have heard, and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.” — PSALMS lxxviii. 2 — 7.

“WHATSOEVER was written aforetime, was written for our instruction, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.” The perpetuity of divine truth, and the enlargement of its boundaries in our world, has ever been an important object in the arrangements of divine providence. While the modes of its communication to the world, its constantly increasing splendor, and the happiness it casts around it wherever its light shines, commands our admiration, we cannot be less impressed with the fact, that notwith-



standing its opposition to our depraved nature, and in spite of the inveterate malice borne to it, it yet maintains its standing and extends its triumphs ; proving that the God of truth will ever assert his supremacy, disappoint his enemies, and make man happy.

In contemplating the history of Scriptural truth, it is truly interesting to observe how its great author can raise up instruments to make it known. There have been periods when comparatively little attention has been paid to it, and when ignorance and idolatry have threatened to prevail ; but at such times, he who has the residue of the Spirit has caused holy influence to descend on some of his servants, who have thus been strong to do exploits. Such appears to have been the case in connection with the psalm before us. We cannot be quite certain either as to its author or occasion ; but the opinion of Calmet and others appears quite probable, that it was composed by Asaph, many years after the death of David, in the reign of Asa, the third king of Judah. For twenty years, during the government of Jeroboam and Abijah, had these tribes departed from God ; but when Asa, a pious young man, came to the throne, he adopted means for the revival of true religion, while Asaph reminds his brethren of the blessings of divine Revelation made known to their fathers and handed down to them, and enforces the importance of their being impressed on the minds of the rising generation. Similar instances of the kindness of God in reviving attention to his cause might be referred to in the history both of the Old and New Testaments ; nor scarcely less interesting are the circumstances of this kind which have passed before our review within the last sixty years.

But the passage we have read as a text, has an especial reference to human duty in connection with this great subject. We are fully aware of its comprehensive character, and of the vast variety of trains of thought which it would present to every contemplative mind ; but the one subject, to the brief illustration of which our present attention will be directed, is that of *the transmission of Scriptural truth to posterity*. And, if we have not mistaken the whole character of our text, it presents to us *four* grand arguments why we should zealously devote ourselves to this duty.

The *first* is derived from the peculiar character of scriptural truth.

The *second* arises out of the manner in which we have been put into its possession.

The *third* is drawn from the divine arrangements as to its communication from one class of persons to another. And,

The *fourth* will be seen in connection with the great results it is intended to produce.

It will be apparent to all of you, that the utmost which can be attempted by the preacher, on this occasion, will be a very imperfect glance at each particular of this scheme.

I. The *first* argument in favor of zealous exertion for the transmission of scriptural truth to posterity, is derived from THE PECULIARITY OF ITS CHARACTER.

The knowledge of temporal affairs, of human sciences, and of the various things which contribute to present happiness, is vastly important, and it would be cruelty to withhold it from the young; but here we have before us a volume of truth, a series of discoveries, and precepts of duty which angels could not have given us, but which are put into our hands while they are even yet withheld from the vast mass of mankind. When the inspired psalmist speaks of the Holy Volume as a testimony which Jehovah had established, a law which he had appointed, and as designed to show forth his praises, and to exhibit his power, and his wonderful works, we understand the expressions as denoting the whole of the Sacred Records, in all their fulness, and purity, and beauty. And who can examine this book without grateful admiration and astonishment?

*Look at its revelation of God.* The eternity of his existence, the extent of his power, the penetrating character of his omniscience, the grandeur of his holiness, and the immutability of his perfections, overwhelm us; his regard to man, the manifestations of his love, and the continuance of his favor, notwithstanding our sins, fill us with grateful delight. The history of what he has done, the statement of what he is doing, and the announcement of what he designs, all inspire us with thankful emotions for the possession of such a Book. We rejoice that we have a testimony which is infallibly correct, as we receive it from truth itself; and though the testimony bears most affecting witness against our wicked feelings and base conduct against God, yet the very pain it excites is salutary, and contributes to the happiness to which the Book of God tends.

*Look at the instruction it affords, as to our duty.* While it presents God as our Creator and Benefactor, it demands that we love him; while it describes the whole human race as children of one common family, it calls for mutual and universal love; it identifies our duty and our happiness; and deriving its sanctions from eternity, it calls us to the discharge of present duty. It inculcates our pursuit of happiness for ourselves, our bestowment of our regards on our fellow-men, and the consecration of all our powers to God. Oh, how glorious the word of God considered as a *law*!

But above all, consider Revelation *as a history of God's conduct*. And here the details of creation are lovely, the records of his providence are profoundly instructive; but his acts of redemption are surrounded with a splendor which angels themselves cannot fully contemplate. Here we read of the infinity of his love, which eternally decreed the gift of his Son to atone for our sins, and to open the gates of heaven which we had closed against ourselves. We trace the operations of his love in all the transactions of time, and especially in connection with whatever related to the church. We exult in its exhibitions of the incarnation, the life, the sermons, the miracles, the examples, the sufferings, and the death of the Son of God; and we admire the book which presents all these things to our delighted minds, while it unfolds the present engagements of the Redeemer, and his ultimate design of imparting his own joy to all his followers. We gratefully exult in the recollection that the Book of God invites every sinner to the reception of mercy, and presents Jehovah as waiting to be gracious to the penitent.

And now, my brethren, let the man who has personally realized these things, and who exults in the faith of the gospel; who has felt its power in drawing him to Christ, its consoling influence in the hour of sorrow, and its sanctifying tendency in all its operations — let such a man ask himself if this volume of truth ought to be concealed? or rather, whether it should not be made known as extensively as possible? Who among us does not feel it a subject for the warmest congratulation, that from a child he has known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus? And what heart, under the influence of the doctrines which are here taught, and the spirit which is here cherished, does not esteem it at once his duty and his privilege to make known these records to the thousands of the young around him? We should pity the man who possessed the Bible, and who felt no wish for its diffusion; and should be compelled to assert, that however well he might be acquainted with its theory, he never felt any thing of its temper.

II. We draw a *second* argument for the transmission of Scriptural truth to the young from THE MANNER IN WHICH WE HAVE BEEN PUT INTO ITS POSSESSION.

We have neither discovered the truth for ourselves, nor have we by our own powers drawn it from heaven: "We have heard it," "our fathers have told us."

The volume of Divine Revelation is not new. Essential as heavenly truth ever has been to man from the period of the fall, it was not long



before the "day spring from on high" visited our world. The first portion of Revelation was uttered by the lips of Deity directly to man; after which, in various modes and at different periods, this knowledge became deeper and more extensive. In the first instance it was communicated from one to another only by the human voice. The memory of man was the only depository of the word of God. After a while it was committed to writing, and holy men of God transmitted from their own generation downwards to others the information which Jehovah had given. It must have been interesting to hear the patriarchs telling their children, and their children's children, the wonderful things to which they had been privileged to listen from the lips of their fathers. We could almost wish to have heard the statements of Noah, Abraham, and of Jacob, when surrounded by their respective families. Well, we may listen, and not only read their accounts, but the disclosure of facts, and of the designs of God to which they would have gladly attended, but died without knowing.

From the fathers of antiquity we have received the lively oracles of truth. Here is the delineation of human character and misery, and of the divine method of making man happy. Our fathers received the truth from heaven, and tested its character and its power; they felt its happy results in the regeneration and sanctification of their souls; they exulted in its consolations in the hour of trial; they made arrangements for its descent from age to age till time should cease to roll round; they adhered to the truth in defiance of persecution; they extended it, though human laws combined against them; and then multitudes of them — to prove their faith and to show its influence — cheerfully met death in its defence. Thus did they show their regard to the authority of heaven, their love to the truth as it is in Jesus, and their pure and exalted concern for the souls of their fellow-men.

We grant, that now we have a more sure word than that of tradition; we thank God that we have a higher standard of appeal than the frail memory of man, which might be injuriously acted upon by his depravity; but we will be grateful too, that holy men orally instructed us in the way of salvation. We should deeply pity the youth who would turn a deaf ear to the warm and faithful instructions of a beloved parent or friend; who would close his eyes against the life which illustrates and adorns Christianity; and who would barricade his heart against the reception of a spirit of light, of purity, and of joy, which the man of God ever desires instrumentally to communicate.

There is, my brethren, a feeling of deep interest produced by the recollections of a pious education. After the lapse of many years, the mind seems to place itself in the shades of the scenes it once witnessed.



We recall the features, the words, the tones, the tears, and the actions of our teachers. We connect their instructions with the spirit they manifested ; and the truths they taught are exemplified in the character they sustained. We retrace their lives, and we follow them again to their closing scēnes, and feel that our hearts are made better ; that we are more detached than we were from earth, and that we have an increasingly strong desire to “ be followers of them who, through faith and patience, are inheriting the promises.”

Here, then, we take our stand, and say, that as we have received the knowledge of God and the way of happiness from our fathers, who showed us by their lips and their lives the way of happiness, we are bound, by every consideration of gratitude, to give to others what has been so freely given to us. We have never been constituted sole proprietors of the truth of God, but have been made trustees of it also for others. Who among us could be so ungrateful, so unjust, so cruel, as to keep back that which has been committed to him for his children ; the withholding of which does not enrich him, but makes them poor indeed ? By the good providence of God our ancestors have enabled us to say, that “ the lines have fallen to us in pleasant places, and that we have a goodly heritage ; ” and by that same providence shall our children rise up to call us blessed ; for we “ will endeavor that after our decease they shall have these things in remembrance,” and be enabled to hand them down with still increased efficiency to their posterity.

III. We hasten, brethren, to present a *third* argument for the discharge of this duty, arising out of THE DIVINE ARRANGEMENTS AS TO ITS TRANSMISSION.

“ He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children.” It is a doctrine well understood by every true Christian, that we are not to be guided in our conduct by our own sinful inclinations. The very essence of true religion is the submission of the heart and life to the service of God ; every thing will be found to establish the fact asserted in our text, that the Divine being requires us to instruct the young in the things which belong to their peace. If the parent examines his own heart, he will find that all the tenderest feelings of his nature combine to interest him in the happiness of his children, and he *cannot* withhold from them the information which would add to their enjoyment ; he could not see them exposed to danger without pointing out the way of escape ; he could not behold the way of happiness opening to their view and not point out the blissful road. Humanity, too, enlarges this feeling and compels it to

comprehend the whole human race. We see our fellow-men exposed to the same common calamities, we contemplate them all as capable of vast enjoyments, and we feel ashamed of ourselves when we do not intently pursue the objects which will add to their felicity. And when, as Christians, we open the volume of Divine Revelation, we see how, from the days of Abraham downwards, very specific directions have been given from heaven as to the obligations of good men to give instructions to the ignorant; and we behold the pleasing combinations of the pious in every age to accomplish the important object.

But our text, and the volume of inspiration generally, shows the duty of Christians to have an especial reference to the *young*. Fathers are commanded to make known the commands and the character of God to their children. Various powerful reasons might be assigned for this infinitely wise arrangement. The young come into our world with an awfully strong bias to evil, and it is unspeakably important to check the workings of their depravity by presenting the most powerful considerations which tend to the accomplishment of such an end. They are exposed to the most awful dangers arising from this depraved disposition, from the manifold temptations of Satan, from the evils they witness in the corrupted state of society, and from ten thousand allurements to vice to which they are always exposed. Oh, how needful, then, that we should draw light from heaven to guide their feet in the way of peace, that they may at once be delivered from evil, and led into all that is good.

There are yet other considerations which should have their full influence in this weighty affair. Those to whom we are called on to give instruction are the hope of the future, they are those who must succeed us in the discharge of the duties of life, they will give a character to the next age; nay, their conduct will have its influence on generations yet to come. Who that feels as he ought to do is not desirous of being fairly represented to posterity? and who, that rolls his eye over the scroll of prophecy, can forbear to witness the important events which are soon to be accomplished, or cease to feel an intense interest in the training of those who will take a part in the still severer struggle to which we look forward, between sin and holiness?

Nor must it be forgotten here, that, as immortal creatures, the character of man is usually formed in youth for eternity. Comparatively few cases occur in which the great process of regeneration is known in the heart beyond the middle stage of life. If these children were permitted to grow up in the ways of ignorance and sin, and to pass to mature life in that state, the strong probability is, that they would continue to live neither receiving nor communicating happiness for

eternity. The mind derives its character from the transactions into which it comes in contact in the first years of its existence. Oh, Christians, what a motive to effort! Oh, teachers, what a motive to diligence!

IV. These remarks seem to connect themselves with the *fourth* argument we deduce from our text in favor of the transmission of Scriptural truth to posterity, it is derived from THE GREAT RESULTS WHICH IT IS INTENDED TO ACCOMPLISH.

God had a most important object to effect by the donation of his Word to the world, and he intends that by the communication of his truth to the young, "they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments." It is truly delightful to contemplate the possibility, nay, the certainty, of man being again brought into contact with the Most High. Melancholy, indeed, is the fact, that he has departed from the fountain of felicity and fixed his hopes of enjoyment on created objects, that he should have so far forgotten the character and just claims of Jehovah as to engage in actual rebellion against his government, and to have formed an agreement with fallen angels to hurl Deity from his throne. But this state of things is not always to continue. He who sent his Son into our world to die for man, graciously engaged that he should see the full desires of his soul in the renovation of the moral world. We are even now contemplating the new creation of earth; the command is gone forth to that end, and Jehovah calls upon us to behold him making his world anew. The sons of men must be brought to fix their best affections on the great source of all excellence, to study every part of his will, and to give every energy they possess to the advancement of his glory. This is, indeed, a scene on which the attention of angels may be well fixed, and which is every way adapted to call forth their warmest admiration. Over such facts they may again sing, and these sons of God may shout aloud for joy.

It is eminently adapted, my brethren, to increase and to purify our zeal, to remember that we are not now rejoicing in the mere paintings of imagination; but that we are exulting in what shall soon prove sober and blessed reality! He who created the world hath confirmed the fact, staking his very existence upon it, that the whole earth shall be filled with his glory.

Oh, how blissful the reflection, that a period shall arrive in the history of our race when the evil dispositions which are now the foundation of misery, shall be destroyed, when man shall cease to be filled with envy, and wrath, and all uncharitableness, and when he shall be



filled with love to God and man — at once happy in himself, and doing whatever may lie in his power to make others happy.

Equally interesting is it to remark, that this mighty change is not to be brought about by miraculous agency, but simply by means of man communicating to man the knowledge of God. Those who possess this knowledge will give it to others till all the world shall rejoice in its light. Every individual who receives the knowledge of God, in the love of it, becomes a moral sun, diffusing light and warmth around him, the glorious effects of which shall be felt through all the changes of time, and in eternity itself. When we contemplate, for instance, the thousands of the young who, in connection with this congregation, have been taught in the knowledge of the Scriptures; and especially when we remember the many scores who have been morally renewed by it, it is impossible for us to calculate the good which it has effected, or fully to conceive of the infinite ramifications of this river of life, scattering its blessings through the world, down to the very end of time — and then anew displaying themselves in the eternal world.

But we must hasten to a close. The very soul of preaching is practical application. We have seen something in the history of the people of God which tends to confirm all that we have said; and have been fully convinced, that the church of Christ has been most prosperous when it has been most attentive to the spiritual interests of the rising generation. But we are desirous of leading you very fully to act on our text.

Will you permit the preacher to indulge for a moment or two in the narration of a plain, unvarnished tale? Some three or four and thirty years ago, a little company of the followers of the Redeemer, in connection with this Christian church — some of whom continue to this day, but many are fallen asleep — resolved on directing the attention of the children of the poor more fully to Christ. Their number was not large, their attainments, generally speaking, were not great, and, in the esteem of the world, their prospect was not cheering; but God has always commenced his great proceedings with small means; among some of the earliest of its scholars was a little orphan boy,

“The son of parents passed into the skies,”

both of whom once communed with this Christian society. The Sunday School taught him to read his Bible, to weep over sin, and to entertain high thoughts of the Savior; while its best friends provided for each of his temporal wants. As time rolled along it brought with it new mercies, till that boy, it was humbly hoped, became a follower of Jesus, was numbered with his people, entered the Christian min-



istry, and labored in the Christian cause of Christ it is believed not without success. And now at the end of eight-and-twenty years, he appears among you this morning to erect his stone of Ebenezer in grateful remembrance of divine mercies, to weep over parental and friendly dust, and to avow his increasing attachment to Sabbath schools. The fathers are gone; the very prophets depart hence; but turning to these young persons, we say to your pastor, your deacons, and to every Christian, "These same shall comfort you concerning the work and the toil of your hands."

Pardon, my brethren, this allusion to the personal history of the preacher; it has been called forth by grateful recollections of bygone days. "If I forget thee," O, thou Sunday school, "let my right hand forget her cunning, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not thee to my chief joy. For my brethren and companions' sakes I will now say, peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord my God I will seek thy good."

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## SERMON XXVIII.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF JUSTIFYING FAITH?

BY THE HON. AND REV. B. W. NOEL.

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood."—ROM. iii. 25.

THE previous verses of this passage teach us these important truths: that all of us are, by nature and practice, condemned by the law of God, and consequently that no obedience to that law which condemns, can justify us; but that there is, notwithstanding, a justification provided for a certain class of persons by God himself, which is here termed "*His* righteousness:" that this justification is a free gift to sinners—absolutely, divinely free; yet, nevertheless, that it has been obtained for them by the costly sacrifice of the Son of God, and is not granted of *mere* mercy, but is granted to them of mercy "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Having stated these truths, the apostle tells us, in the words which I have read, to *what class of persons* that blessing is restricted. It is not granted to all mankind, but it is granted to those who believe in Christ; "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation *through faith in his blood.*"

The original cause, then, of the justification of a sinner, is the absolute mercy of God ; the meritorious cause of a sinner's justification, is the obedience and the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ ; and the instrumental cause of a sinner's justification is faith in that Redeemer. There is but one original cause, — which is mercy ; there is but one meritorious cause, — and that is redemption by Christ ; and there is but one instrumental cause, — and that is faith in Christ. “ Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through *faith in his blood.*”

Let us look to God the Spirit, who alone can make his own word profitable, while we consider what is the nature of justifying faith, the extent to which it justifies, and the manner in which it justifies. The whole statement is very simple, but it is of great moment to every single person of this congregation. It is of the last consequence to us, that we not only know what this faith is, but have it. It is of the utmost moment to you and me, that we have this faith ; and it is my object, in the simple exposition which may follow these words, to lead you, as an instrument in the hands of the great God, not only to know what justifying faith is, but to have it.

Let us think, first, what it is *not* : because, this may enable us the more clearly to observe what *it is*.

The faith, of which the apostle speaks in these words, through which Christ becomes a propitiation for any individual sinner, is *not* a belief in the truth of the fact, that Christ is come, or that the New Testament is a divinely inspired revelation of that fact and its consequences. Because, faith in Christ is evidently trust in Christ ; it is the meaning of the word. No man can pretend to have faith in Christ, and not trust Christ : just as a person could not pretend to have faith in his physician, and not trust his physician. But a person may believe in the truth that Christ is come, and may believe that the New Testament reveals that fact, its character and its consequences, and yet have no trust in Christ, and therefore not have the “ faith in his blood,” which is spoken of here.

It is *not*, further, a belief in the truth of all the principal doctrines of the gospel. This is a step beyond the last ; for there are many persons, that do credit the gospel to be a revelation from God, and yet know little of the doctrines it contains ; nay, reject most of its doctrines. But a person may reject none of them — may admit in terms their truth, see the proofs of them in the Scripture, and maintain them all, and yet that person may have no faith in Christ. Because, Christ has come to offer salvation to us as sinners ; but it is obvious, that a person may credit the truth of these doctrines, and not trust in Christ

to save his soul. And if so, he is an unbeliever : he disbelieves that Christ has come to save his soul. He may be destitute of all trust in Christ, and yet believe the great facts of the gospel, to a certain degree and in a certain sense. And this faith is that which is possessed by fallen spirits, who know very well the great truths of the gospel, and are busily engaged in opposing them in the world. That which a man only shares with the great enemies of God and man, cannot be the faith which saves.

The same remarks will apply to this further stage — the state of a person, who believes that Christ Jesus is able and willing to save others, but does not believe in Christ as about to save *him*. For this also he shares with fallen beings. “The devils believe and tremble,” when they think that Christ has come to save others, but has not come to save them ; and this belief, instead of teaching them to love Christ, only embitters their hatred. It may do so with a sinful *man*, and consequently is *not* that trust in Christ which will save him.

And again, to believe in our own personal safety through Christ is, on the other hand, *not* justifying faith. Because, many an ignorant and criminal enthusiast has believed this, while his whole life was one of disobedience to God’s commands, and of manifest enmity to God. To believe that we are personally safe, that we are the elect of God through Christ, that we are through Christ children of God, and the favorites of heaven, and sure of being saved, may be to believe a falsehood — a mere delusion. It may be, that the person who has this belief, is none of those things. And it is obvious, that if the great enemy of souls could desire any thing respecting one of his miserable captives, he would mostly desire this ; that while he is living in his sins, and posting down to destruction, he should be perfectly persuaded, that he was one of God’s elect, a child of God and an heir of glory through Christ: because, that delusion would prevent repentance, and would, more than any thing else, deepen and perpetuate his sleep of sin.

None of these things can be the justifying faith, of which our text speaks. But justifying faith is —

The trust which a sinner feels in Christ, to save him from hell, as a divine Savior, in the method he has revealed, by his atoning sacrifice, and by his sanctifying Spirit.

This is justifying faith. Let us briefly illustrate its various characteristics.

It must be a trust in Christ to save *us*. We must see, that the Lord Jesus Christ is able and willing to save *us*. Because, my brethren, Christ is come for this purpose. It is this blessing he offers to us,

as ruined sinners. He has assured you and me, that he is able and willing to save us. It is the purpose for which he died — for which the Bible has been written ; and to disbelieve that, would be to disbelieve one of the very principal truths that he has revealed, the principal act he came to accomplish ; and would be, not faith, but unbelief. To disbelieve that, is not trust in Christ, but distrust of him ; and no one can suppose, that he has justifying faith in Christ, while he disbelieves one of the principal things revealed concerning him. As we have seen, to disbelieve that, is to be in the condition of rebellious and apostate spirits ; and that is not the trust, that he will bless. On the contrary, to believe that he is willing and able to save *us*, notwithstanding all our guilt, in the midst of all our dangers, with the sentence of God's law pronounced against us, in the face of an obedience required which we cannot pay, in the sight of a disobedience which merits eternal death — that is the trust he asks from us all. The eternal Son of God demands of every one of you, and of me, that we do individually trust him to save *us*.

It is, in the next place, a trust in him to save us *from hell*. If we should trust Christ to save us from any thing less, this would not be to credit the great truth revealed concerning him. We do in fact deserve to perish ; we are on our road to perdition, till that blessed moment when we believe on Christ ; God's law condemns us, and gracious as he is, he will certainly execute the sentence of his law ; from that Christ has undertaken to save us ; and to disbelieve that, is, again I say, to be an unbeliever. It is not to trust him, but to want trust in him ; it is not faith, but unbelief ; and he who should believe any thing else of Christ, but should not believe that he is able and willing to save him from hell — from eternal wrath — from all the consequences of his transgression — would not be a believer in Christ. But if we should actually perish without Christ, and he has come to save us from perishing, as his word continually declares, then we deserve it ; for the Almighty could not inflict upon us that which we do not merit. Hence, to believe that Christ is able and willing to save us from hell, is to believe that we deserve it ; and it implies the conviction on our parts, that we are lost without him, that there is no method of salvation but in him, that he alone stands between us and everlasting ruin, that if God gave us our desert individually, we individually should perish. This is what faith in Christ implies ; and if any man denies that of himself, does not own it, questions it, puts the thought aside, does not explicitly and solemnly confess it to himself and God, he may rest assured he has no faith in Christ. He may believe other things



respecting Christ ; but the great truth that he has come to save him from eternal ruin, that man rejects.

I said, again, that justifying faith is the persuasion, that Christ is able and willing to save us from hell, *as a divine Savior*. Because, he cannot save us in any other capacity. If Christ were a mere man, his obedience and his sufferings could no more save us, than the obedience and sufferings of any martyr, like Paul, or like Bradford. Christ's obedience and sufferings would be no more rational a foundation for our hope, were he but a man, than the obedience and sufferings of other holy men ; and if we were to expect to be saved by Christ as a man, instead of exercising the faith he looks for, we should be unbelievers still. For the truth is, that his love passes all knowledge, as his merit passes all knowledge, because as incarnate God he died in our stead. And hence, if we were to deny this of him, we should deny the principal truth concerning him. We may call ourselves Christians after denying it, but we have altered not one truth — as men pretend — we have altered the whole truth respecting the gospel ; fundamentally altered it ; changed the whole character of a sinner's trust ; swept away at one fell blow all those powerful motives we have to obedience and love ; sentenced man, as the consequence of that denial, to perpetual disobedience and enmity to God. And *that* men call altering one of the dogmas of Christianity ! No, brethren ; if we do not rest on Christ as a divine Savior, who has come in our nature to rescue us from the hell we merited, we have no justifying faith in him. It is such a faith as Nero had when he heard of his crucifixion ; such a faith as Pontius Pilate had, when he sentenced him to death ; the belief that he is a good man : a belief which does him infinite dishonor. To believe in Christ so as to be saved, is to look to him to save us from hell as a divine Savior.

I said, again, that justifying faith in Christ is the belief in him as a divine Savior, to save us in the method he has himself revealed, *by his atoning sacrifice* ; or rather, by his *redemption* — by his obedience and sufferings on our behalf. If we should look to be saved in any other way than by his atoning sacrifice, we should essentially mutilate his gospel, deny his claim, and discard that which is the principal foundation of our confidence before God. The word of God declares, that we are “justified freely, by God's mercy, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” To believe that Christ came to set us a bright example, and to give us wise and divine counsels, and to animate us with powerful motives to virtue, and there to end, and there to let our faith terminate, is to deny the one great truth revealed in all this book, for which this book has been revealed — that the Lord Jesus Christ, incarnate God in our nature, died in our place, bore the punishment we

must have borne, and by that punishment borne in his person, has done away the necessity that we should suffer any punishment. If we expected to be saved in any other way, we should not be believing God, but believing a falsehood; we should not then be trusting Christ to save us according to his own revealed method, but in another method of our own, which would dishonor him, and be a reason for our condemnation, and not for our acceptance before God. Hence, justifying faith is a dependence on Christ to save us by the merit of his obedience and his sufferings.

And lastly, justifying faith is an expectation of being saved by him from hell, not only by the merit of his atoning sacrifice, but *by the power of his sanctifying Spirit*. This, again, is revealed in Scripture. He has told us, that he means to save us thus, and in no other way. He has never promised a person to save him *in sin*, but has declared he means to save us *from sin*. He has not said, that he would save us without the aid of the Spirit, but by giving us the Spirit. He has not told us, that he will save us without the exertion to which grace prompts, but by that exertion. There is no word of Scripture, which states that we shall be saved with unholy hearts, but — “without holiness no man shall see the Lord?” not one word, which intimates that prayerless habits will conduct us to glory, but — “whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved;” and so on, of the whole circle of Christian obligation. To believe, therefore, that Christ will save us without making us holy, and without conducting us to loving obedience, is to believe a falsehood. It is to deny what he has declared. It is not to trust him — to exercise faith on him; for faith must rest on his Word; there is no other foundation for it. It is to be placing a presumptuous confidence in a mischievous and criminal delusion. That is not faith.

To believe in Christ as the Savior of our souls from hell, secures obedience in another way, and leads in another manner to a supreme love to Christ; but you will observe, that it not only leads to it — it actually involves it. Because, faith in Christ involves submission to his will: just as faith in a guide involves the disposition to follow him, or faith in a commander involves the readiness to march and fight at his command, or faith in a physician the determination to take his medicines. Should a man be lost amidst dangerous precipices, and not know how to effect his escape, and a guide well versed in the mountain paths should point out the road of safety, and assure him that if he followed it, he would be safe; faith in that mountain guide would lead the lost pilgrim at once to follow. If an army were surrounded by perils, and expecting to be destroyed, but their commander assured

them that he would point out the road to victory, if they marched under his orders, and fought at his command; faith in that commander would lead them, necessarily, to march and to fight. If men were persuaded that their physician could save them by the remedies he prescribed, faith in that physician would lead them to adopt those remedies. In every instance faith has thus this practical character; leading to submission to those methods, which the person in whom we trust, makes the conditions of safety. And hence, to trust in Christ for our salvation, not only leads to loving him, and leads to obeying him, (as it is most certain it does,) but likewise it includes in the very idea of it the placing ourselves absolutely under Christ's care. He offers to save us in one way and to trust that he will save us in that way, is to submit to that way. So that if we believe in Christ to save us by communicating his sanctifying Spirit, it implies that we seek that Spirit; if we believe that he will save us by making us holy, it implies that we consent to be made holy; if we believe that he will save us in the course of obedience to God's law, it implies that from the moment we believe we are ready so to obey. Imagine for a moment the contrary; that a person should believe that he shall be saved by Christ while he resolves not to obey, not to be holy, not to welcome the gift of his Spirit; then he would believe in that which was false, instead of believing in Christ, for Christ has never promised to save any one, who is nourishing those tempers.

Thus we come to this general truth: that justifying faith in Christ is the trust that any one feels in him, to save himself from eternal death, as a divine Savior, in the method he has himself revealed, by his atoning sacrifice, and by his sanctifying grace.

To what extent, let us ask, in the next place, does the possession of this faith justify? "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood."

I have often dwelt on the scriptural proofs of this point in our subject; I shall therefore merely remind you in passing, that this faith is spoken of in Scripture, as justifying by itself—as the one sole condition of justification. "Therefore we conclude," says the apostle, in a verse which follows our text, "that a man is justified *by faith*, without the deeds of the law." This justifying faith is further declared, in Scripture to secure the acquittal of any person who trusts Christ. It is not the less guilty only, but the most guilty may secure acquittal and safety by its instrumentality. As the apostle here tells us—"the righteousness of God is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference." The worst and the



best, all may alike be justified, upon their receiving this inestimable gift of God; and he who believes, is pardoned and accepted. The Scripture no less declares, that those who possess this justifying faith, are acquitted of all their sins, and are entitled to all the privileges of the new covenant. "By him all that believe are justified from all things." The justification is complete; so that a sinner is accepted as though he was perfectly innocent, becomes a child of God, and is adopted by his love, and receives all the blessings of his children, including preservation by his power and grace, and then eternal glory, which he has received for all who love him and obey him. And again: this justifying grace secures all these privileges, the very first moment it is exercised. As there is nothing else — nothing whatever — which is the condition of justification, therefore years of obedience can add nothing to it. The moment a sinner believes, he passes from a state of condemnation into a state of justification. The dying thief believed upon Christ, and he merited eternal death, and was within a few minutes of it, but, in that moment when he believed, all his sins were pardoned, and at once Christ said to him, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." And that is the rule; that is what must ensue. If it be true that faith is the one condition, the one instrument of the sinner's justification, then the moment he possesses that one instrument, the moment he has fulfilled that one condition, he is a justified person. To delay it, would be to interfere with that divinely ordained method of justification; it would be to bring in something else as the condition; and it could be easily shown, that the introduction of any delay would be the dishonor of Christ. If faith in him is the one appointed condition, the moment that any sinner, however black the guilt which he has contracted, does rest his soul upon Christ as the one great atoning sacrifice, and the prevailing intercessor, that moment are his sins obliterated, and he is adopted into the family of God.

Let us now, in the last place, consider for a moment the manner in which this faith justifies.

We have already seen, that a sinner is justified without the deeds of the law; and this proves, not merely that a sinner is justified without the merit of the law, without the merit of works, but that he is justified without the condition of works; and that it is as unscriptural, to declare that faith on the condition of works justifies, as to say that faith justifies by the merit of Christ *and* the merit of works. There is no condition of works; and could there be, it must be obvious to the dullest understanding that two things would follow: first, that the being justified by works, as a condition appointed by God in addition to that



of faith, would so far obscure the glory of the Savior, through whose sole merit the sinner is accepted; and next, that it would necessarily and invariably lead each person to trust his own works, rather than Christ. It would be vain, to tell persons that there was no merit in those works, but that their works were the condition of justification, just as their faith was; inevitably and necessarily, they would attach the idea of their justification and salvation to those works, and on those works they would rest. And thus, both a sinner would be separated from that exclusive confidence in the merit of Christ which he ought to feel, and the merit of Christ would be necessarily obscured by the very fact of such a condition.

God has made no such condition. The one condition is faith. And since the Redeemer is the sole meritorious cause of the justification of any sinner, we see that it must be becoming and fitting in the Almighty, to grant the sinner's justification in such a way, as shall give Christ all the glory. He has, therefore, made faith the sole condition; because it is most obvious, that by faith as the sole condition does Christ receive, as he ought, all the glory. Let a sinner trust in Christ alone for his salvation from eternal death; and then, placing himself as a ruined creature under Christ's care, it is what you might expect from the infinite mercy of that gracious Redeemer, that he should welcome such a humble penitent. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." If we apply to Christ for salvation with no other plea than this, that we are ruined, and he is a mighty and a gracious Savior. Christ asks nothing else. What else should he ask? An atonement? He came himself to atone. Holiness and love? He came, not to find them in the rebellious, but to create them both. He asks, therefore, nothing else; but if a humbled sinner feels that he is ruined, and applies to Christ as a gracious and mighty Savior, to rescue him from eternal death, Christ is gracious enough to welcome him. He becomes Christ's disciple; he receives all through Christ; and as a humble penitent, renouncing his rebellion, he both acknowledges his own ruin, trusts the merit of the Savior in opposition to a trust in the mere mercy of God, and in opposition to a trust in any merit of his own, and so submits to Christ's method of saving him, and places himself under his dominion, to be sanctified and guided from that day. For such Christ intercedes; welcoming the penitent believer, who gives him all the glory, he now intercedes for him; and God accepts the intercession; and that penitent believer trusting exclusively to Christ, is welcomed through his intercession. At the same time, you may see, that when a person thus trusts in Christ alone, he does what in him lies, to proclaim to the whole world

around him his sense of the enormity of sin, which could be pardoned by no other sacrifice than Christ's; and his sense of the holiness and truth of God, who would admit him on no other terms; and his sense of the infinite mercy and infinite merit of Christ, through whom he is accepted; and his sense of the need that his rebellious heart should be brought back again to God, by his submitting to be saved by his sanctifying grace; and by this does he give all the glory in a sinner's power to that great and gracious Savior.

What other instrument of justification *can* be so suitable as this? We see, on the one hand, that God will justify a sinner because of Christ's righteousness, and will give to Christ all the glory; we see, on the other hand, an instrument of justification, by which all the glory *is* rendered to Christ; and it must be plain to the commonest understanding, that that instrument, and none other, is that which may be most honorable to God, to order and establish as the one condition of a sinner's salvation. Is there merit in this act of faith? No more than there was in Peter, when, because he was sinking in the water, he trusted Christ's power and love to save him from it. No more than there was in the army of Israel, when they believed that the power of God would divide for them the Red Sea, and carry them in safety through it. No more merit, than there is in the destitute and dying welcoming the alms, that may save them from destruction. There is no merit in faith. It is not by faith as a work, by faith as a meritorious attainment, that any sinner is justified; but it is by the riches of Christ, which faith apprehends, and lays hold upon. It is by that which gives to Christ all the glory, and precludes all merit in the sinner, that God has determined to justify every sinner who *is* justified.

If this, my brethren, be the plain, scriptural account of the way in which a sinner is justified by God, it is very easy to see how important it is, that you and I should not alone reason about faith, not alone talk about faith, but should *have* this justifying faith. In fact, it is impossible for me adequately to state the importance of obtaining this blessing. All blessings flow from it. Once obtain this saving faith in Christ, and we are glorious forever. Once obtain it, and the attributes of God are around us, like a fortress, that no evil can invade. Once obtain it, and the privileges of the new covenant of grace are ours. Without it, we are shut out from salvation, and honor, and happiness. No words can express the importance of every living and thinking soul in this congregation getting this faith. We *must* have it. We shall be lost without it. We shall hasten down to ruin, if we have not faith; and the more we know of it, the more convinced we are of it. the worse will it be for us

if we do not get it. That faith must burn in our bosoms, as the principle of eternal life, or we perish. We must have it, or we die.

Does any one here say — I cannot have it ; I have no faith, and I *cannot* have it ? What does that mean — I cannot have faith ? Is Christ deserving your confidence ? Are God's invitations plain and certain ? Is it necessary to escape from hell, and to reach heaven ? Must you be happy ? Have you an indestructible thirst after happiness ? Is the way to happiness made plain before you ? Why, then, do you not take it ? What is the meaning of saying, I *cannot* believe ?

It means *this*, as you must see if you recall what justifying faith is : I cannot see that I am a lost sinner ; I will not own it ; and therefore I cannot trust Christ's atoning sacrifice, and Christ's sanctifying grace. Is *this* what it means ? Then what fatal pride there is in that man, or woman, or child, in this congregation, that ventures, in the face of facts that will silence all of us when we stand before the judgment seat, and ought to silence all of us now, to say — I cannot own that I am a hell-doomed sinner ; I cannot own that I merit my Maker's eternal curse ? We shall see it plainly enough hereafter, if we do not see it now ; and there is nothing to account for the dulness of our vision, but the pride of our hearts. What fatal pride, if we should have to own before God at the last, that in the face of all the clearest demonstration of his word, his attributes, and the workings of our own common sense, we denied that we deserved his eternal wrath !

Or does it mean — I cannot trust Christ's great sacrifice, and perfect obedience, and declared love ? What ingratitude to him ! what causeless unbelief ! Is it true, or is it not true, that that unseen, but Almighty Savior is ready to intercede for you, and give you his Spirit, and carry you to heaven ? Is it true, or is it not, that there is not one soul in this congregation, for whom Christ Jesus did not give his blood, and whom he is not now ready to make a child of God and an heir of heaven ? What fatal, what damnable unbelief, if notwithstanding all this, any one in this congregation says — I cannot trust him !

Or does it mean, that because he has revealed that he will save you by making you holy, by leading you to obey, by making you mortify your sins, by giving you the sanctifying spirit through which all this may be done, you cannot submit to that ; you must hold your sins ; you must still live in that which God forbids ; you must still cherish that which God's law condemns ? Why, in the face of such fearful sanctions, and notwithstanding such plain and reiterated commands, and when such infinite mercy is extended to you, to refuse salvation because you will cling to sin — oh ! it must silence every one at the last, if nothing else did ; it must strike such an arrow of remorse into



the miserable soul, that will have then to own — I might have been rescued and blessed for ever, but I would not give up my rebellion against God. Alas! alas! it will deepen all the gloom of the condemnation, that is resting upon you already.

But if still you tell me that you are obliged to say, I cannot believe; are you to sit down in despair? Here is a fearful load of guilt upon you; must you sit down in despair? Do you say — What can I do? I am lost, I shall sink into perdition, I have not believed, I cannot believe; all this is true, but I must sink into perdition, helpless and hopeless? You only half believe that; or you would not sit still and do nothing. Depend upon it, when any man says, I must sit still and do nothing, because I cannot believe, he has only half a conviction of his melancholy state. A little deeper conviction of the absolute and intolerable misery to which such a state is leading, would make you at once begin to be active in doing what *you can*.

Do you say — What can we do? There are many things, God's Word declares you not only *can*, but *must* do. It is our duty to believe in Christ at once. It is the duty of every man, woman, and child in this assembly, to believe in Christ now. There is evidence that ought to convince every one, at once, without any further examination; and the obligations resting upon us are such, that not one night ought to be lost; not one minute's delay ought to be interposed. Christ offers you and me salvation, if we trust him; and it is our duty to trust him now. We are lost, and he offers to save us from hell by his atoning sacrifice, by his sanctifying Spirit; and he only asks us to trust him. We ought to trust him *now*.

But if the hardness of any heart forbids it; if the habitual unbelief of any heart forbids; if the devoted love of sin, which still masters any one, forbids it; then what must follow? To do nothing? No. Listen to God's Word, as you hope to be saved. God has required of just such persons — “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Break off every habit of sin. Keep out of the way of temptation. Forsake the company that tempts. Do what you obviously *can*. No one compels you to seek bad company; no one compels you to place yourself in the way of temptation; Satan cannot compel you to any external act. Therefore, break these things off. Break off what-



ever, in fact, interferes with your seeking salvation. Break it off at once. It is God's command.

Is there nothing that you can do? God's Word declares — "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Cannot you call on him? Cannot you at once begin to seek God's mercy? But you have not faith; and you have not earnestness. Still, call on him *as you can*. Begin to pray. Fasten upon your mind the necessity of salvation; and let the cry of your natural distress, if not the prayer of faith, ascend up before God.

God has said in his Word — "The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." Then, in other words, it is when men perceive how the law condemns them, that they flee to Christ as the only Savior. Do not get rid of the sense of guilt; but fasten it on your mind. Meditate on God's holy law; look at all its precepts; apply them to your own case; see how you have violated them; acknowledge the condemnation that law pronounces. Let the humiliating thought rest there, till it compels you to seek salvation by Christ. "The law is our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we may be justified by faith."

Meditate, further, as *you can*, upon the gospel of Christ: for "faith," we read, "cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." When any one will day by day read the Scriptures solemnly and seriously, and endeavor to understand them, and to impress them on his mind, it may be the duty in which God meets him. In the absence of that, how can you expect the blessing? If you despise God's Word, if you neglect his gospel, can you look for salvation? Read it; meditate upon it. You may find, as thousands have, that in that obedience, however imperfect, to God's will, he may meet with you and save you.

If you feel still, that all this may leave you yet unsaved, because none of these things can sanctify, (which is most true,) remember, faith is the gift of his Spirit. It is not wrought by us; it is wrought by him, as many passages with which you are acquainted tell you. If it be wrought by him; if no man can enter heaven except he be regenerate by the Spirit, and it is he who imparts the faith, by which a sinner lays hold on Christ; then recollect that Christ has said, God is more willing to give you that Holy Spirit, if you ask him, than you, if the most loving parent, are willing to give the commonest blessing to your child. Christ has said so, and God will do it. Then wait on him. Ask for that Spirit. Ask it frequently; ask it day by day; never cease from asking, for "men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Ask on, till God grants you that necessary blessing.

These things, at least, you can do; and there are other similar

directions in God's Word, for those who are as yet in their sins. And till all these are done, and have been done long in vain, do not say you can do nothing. If you say so, my dear hearer, it is, depend upon it, because you are only half convinced. Once thoroughly persuaded that you are ruined without Christ, you will gratefully seize the opportunities for these habits, which he has required you at once, as condemned sinners, to exercise and to cultivate.

But how can we express adequately, my Christian brethren, the gratitude we ought to have to God through Christ, if indeed he has given us this inestimable blessing? How can we sufficiently deplore the condition of some among us, to whom it seems almost impossible that they should believe; to whom the difficulty in their way seems almost insuperable? And yet God has taught *us* to believe. Why? Why do we rest on Christ this night? Why do we now look up to our most loving Savior, to deliver us from our guilt and ruin, from the curse of the law, from the malice of Satan, from his temptations, from the eternal wrath we have merited, from all evil; and to place us amongst his people in glory? Why, with a consciousness perhaps as complete as any one can have, that we are utterly deserving of eternal wrath, have we yet this confidence in Christ? Oh! brethren, it is a blessing from God, for which it is impossible we should be sufficiently thankful. Let us day by day exercise that faith. Let not a day go by, without our trusting in Christ still to save us. And may that confidence in him become more and more simple and complete.

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## SERMON XXIX.

DUTY OF ASSAILING THE ERRORS OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.

BY REV. JOHN CUMMING, D. D.

"Put yourselves in array against Babylon round about; all ye that bend the bow shoot at her, spare no arrows; for she hath sinned against the Lord."—JER. l. 14.

THERE can be no question, my Christian brethren, that Babylon is the type and emblem of the popish apostacy. The eighteenth chapter of Revelations, which we have read this evening, and other parallel portions of the inspired record, abundantly demonstrate this. But, as there are several features which confirm this identity, we will endeavor, in humble dependence on grace divine, to lay them before you.

Idolatry was the sin emblazoned on the forehead of ancient Babylon, incorporated with her laws, and interwoven with her habits. Her idols of silver and gold were commensurate with the fantasies of the human heart, and with the passions of men. Now, if we turn to the antitype, the church of Rome, we find that there is no one characteristic more apparent than her idolatry. If she does not worship Baal, and Chemosh, and Jupiter, and Juno, and the other gods of the heathen, she has at least covered or removed their images, and placed in their niches, in the christened Pantheon, those of Peter, and Paul, and Mary. Jesuits may make metaphysical distinctions between *doulia* and *latría*, between veneration and worship; but the fact is not to be denied, that before these images of gold and silver, papists prostrate themselves, and offer to the idol, and not to the being which it represents, very worship, and very prayer and praise. Thus the second commandment is broken, and idolatry chargeable on the church of Rome, and consequently her identity with ancient Babylon is manifest in one feature at least.

Again. A feature in ancient Babylon which stamped her guilt with peculiar depth and dye, was her using the golden vessels of the sanctuary of Jehovah in her idolatrous rites. It was this attempt to blend the high heavens with hell — this mingling of the cups of the Lord amid the cups of demons — that drew down the wrath of God, and nerved the hand which wrote upon the plaster “weighed and found wanting.” Is not this feature clearly developed in the church of Rome? Are not the rites of ancient paganism — her lustrations, processions, incense, &c. intermingled with the pure rites of Christian truth? Are not St. Peter’s and the Pantheon made to coalesce by mutual concessions? Are not the attributes of the Almighty partly attributed to a wafer, and partly wreathed around the temples of a fallible sinner? If ever the light of heaven and the darkness of hell were made to mingle together — if ever fire from above and fire from beneath burned on the same altar — if ever God and man were made, in creeds and canons, to exchange places, it is in the church of Rome; and this other feature seals her identity with ancient Babylon.

Again. A striking feature in the character of ancient Babylon was her persecuting and intolerant disposition. The Greeks and Romans always allowed every man to worship as he liked; but the Babylonians made the decree, “that whosoever would not fall down and worship the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up, should be cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.” Now this is just the very character of popery; — she makes a corruptible



wafer her god; she elevates the host, and whosoever will not fall down and worship the idol which Rome has set up, for him there is the blazing faggot, or the cell of the barbarous inquisition. To know this you have not to go far. The blood of martyrs is not yet dry on the streets and market-places of London; and the wild grey moors of our native Scotland have been drenched by the tears and life-blood of those who preferred death to idolatry, and the vexing of the Spirit of God.

Again. Babylon was long the prison-house of the people of God. For seventy long years was Jerusalem seen on the tablets of memory only, and the tears of Zion's children were shed on the waters of Babel, and their reft harps hung on the weeping willows; and in like manner for centuries did our fathers mourn amid the polluted waters of modern Rome, and even now are there a few in the midst of her to whom we address the echo of Jehovah's voice, "Come out of her, my people." Thus we see that ancient Babylon and modern popery are identified in their character, in their history, aye, and in their fell and dread doom of desolation and dismay. You will, therefore, have a key to unlock many predictions of the prophets, which otherwise would appear inexplicable. We now direct your attention to the grand reason which the Spirit of God assigns for setting ourselves in array against Babylon, namely, "She has sinned against the Lord." She has sinned, *first*, against the institutions of God; *secondly*, against the character of God; and *thirdly*, against the functions of God.

1st. *She has sinned against the institutions of God.* Under this head we would comprehend the Word of God, which he instituted as a light to our feet and a lamp to our path. This blessed book God wrote not with ink, but with the blood of his Son, and inspired with his Holy Spirit. This he gave us, next to his Son, the best and brightest boon he had to bestow; and this book he has caused to be bequeathed by the grave of the martyred father, to the bosom of the obedient son; and this book popery has locked up in a tongue unknown to the mass of the people, or allowed it to be read only by priestly license. "For," says the Council of Trent, "if Holy Bibles are distributed without discrimination, in the vulgar tongue, more harm than good will arise;" nay, "the regular clergy may not read the Bible without permission of their prelates!" We do think that this apostacy has herein been guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost; and we are borne out in this awful charge by the fact, that to Babylon no overture of peace, no promise of mercy is sent in the Scriptures, but threatenings and destinies of blackness and wrath for ever and ever. Adam defaced and marred the pages of the book of creation, which



beamed forth the glory, and the majesty, and the goodness of the Almighty ; but popery has mangled and marred the pages of inspiration, which do contain the brightness of the glory of Jesus. Adam sinned against a creation God, but popery has sinned against a revelation God. From pilgrims and voyagers to eternity, she has filched their chart, their compass, and their pole-star, and left them to thick darkness, and dangerous reefs, and ultimate wreck. From soldiers, necessarily so, she has stolen their sword, their shield, their breastplate, and their helmet, and left them utterly defenceless. Oh! is there not powerful reason in this for putting themselves in array against Babylon ?

She has also desecrated the Sabbaths of the Most High. She has appointed so many holidays (in Spain there are nearly 150,) that the Sabbath is come to be regarded as a very ordinary institution indeed ; even priests and cardinals have declared that it is not by half so sinful to follow our own ways and works on the Sabbath of the Lord, as it is to neglect the observance of the holidays of the church. And actual fact is demonstrative of the tendency and the spirit of the system, for in Portugal, Spain, France, and Italy, the Sabbath-day-theatre is sheltered and fostered by the Vatican, and fairs and revelries are on that day most numerous and interesting. Thus the Sabbath — that fragment of heaven let down upon the bosom of earth — that brightest and best interlude amid the weary weeks of our pilgrimage — that foretaste of the eternal rest, is trodden under the feet of popery, and the Lord of the Sabbath thus sinned against.

2ndly. *She has sinned against the character of God.* The Scriptures declare God to be a Spirit, and that “they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth ;” — this popery has totally overturned. She commands all worship to him to be presented on the *terra incognita* of an unknown tongue ; and all praise and prayer to be offered through idols of silver and gold, made like to corruptible man ; and by these most unholy requirements, has she veiled the character of the Most High in mysticism and in falsehood ; and the God of our Savior is to her victims an unknown God, and the Father of Jesus an unknown Father ; and where and what is revelation if this be so ?

The church of Rome has, by her division of sin into mortal and venial, encouraged and fostered the idea, that the Almighty is not that infinitely Holy Being which the Scriptures represent him to be, and that there cannot have been so urgent a need for the vindication of this great attribute ; and, therefore, that there is not in the atonement all that intense love, and unbending justice, and spotless sanctity, which Protestants magnify and make mention of. She has, in addition

to this, communicated, as much as canons can communicate, some of the glorious attributes of Jehovah to a mortal and sinful man. She has given the names of Deity to the bishop of Rome; and the great prerogative of infallibility has she bestowed alternately on councils and popes. This surely is blasphemy of the most explicit description; this surely is a process in direct opposition to that which the gospel promotes. Man humbled, and God magnified, is the all-pervading tissue of Christianity. God lowered and man installed in his stead, is the direct result of popery.

3. *She has sinned against the peculiar functions of God our Savior.* She has trenched on the *kingly office* of the Lord Jesus by abrogating laws which he has laid down for all generations, and enacting others at issue with the letter and the spirit of his gospel. She has endeavored to dethrone Christ, and enthrone man in his place. She has invaded also the *prophetic office* of Christ. He inspired the oracles of truth, and commanded their universal perusal, and presented himself, their author, as their surest interpreter. But the church of Rome has withheld the whole Bible in some countries, where her tyranny is at its maximum, and locked them up in other countries, in a tongue unknown to the mass of the people; and in a few countries where Protestant truth is too powerful, she has permitted a restricted perusal, or circulated a Bible enveloped in heresy and in perversion of its truths to the destruction of men; and instead of allowing men, by prayer and diligent perusal, to judge for themselves whether these things be so or not, she has commanded them upon the pain of death, and under the sanction of an oath, to receive and believe the interpretations of Councils and Popes, among which there are more contradictions than among all the other sects of Christendom. She has also sinned against the *priestly office* of Christ. She declares that the mass is a true propitiation for the sins of the living and the dead. She declares that the merits of some men are so great, that they can spare a handful for the accommodation of those that can purchase them; and that the merits of others are such as enable them, not only to deserve the grace of justification, but also to increase it; and she asserts that the intercession of saints is extremely important, and their prayers vastly meritorious. We contend that these dogmas which I have shown to be held by the church of Rome from her own missals and councils, which I now hold in my hand, are in direct opposition to the most explicit declarations of the inspired record. "Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many." "This man, after he had offered *one* sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down at the right hand of God:" and "without shedding blood there is no remission of sins,"

are texts which completely overthrow the sacrifice of the mass. "There is but one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus," and "all our righteousness is but as filthy rags," are declarations which alone overthrow the merits of man on the one hand, and establish alone the intercession and mediation of Christ on the other. We might enter into the records of the Inquisition, with all its crimes committed against the saints, dear to Jehovah as the apple of his eye; and we might sum up the history of the doings of the church which have been based on ignorance, and murder, and guilt, but we think we have said enough to prove that Babylon "has sinned against the Lord." All these sins, you will observe, were not the ebullitions of temporary excitement, nor the acts of individuals reprobated by the body to which they belonged; but the development of the spirit and tendencies of the church, and the legitimate prosecution of her most express enactments. Her sins are interwoven with the system, inseparable from it, and to be destroyed with the destruction of Babylon only. But it may be asked, why are we directed to set ourselves in array against Babylon, while infidelity and atheism, and nominal religion, are equally fatal to the everlasting interests of men. The reason is found in the fact, that popery is more congenial to the fallen nature of man, and on this account more likely to captivate and ensnare. There is something so desolating in the creed of atheism, and something so unsatisfactory in the tenets of infidelity, that few are likely theoretically to embrace them. Annihilation so jars with the feelings of instinctive immortality, that we shrink from it; and Deism involves us in so many uncertainties, that we cannot be easy in its society; but popery has a bland aspect and silken meshes, and a far more seductive power than any other earthly system. Popery finds a sphere for every native propensity of man, and withal it pledges a sure reward in eternity. It gives full scope to every depraved desire, and nevertheless holds forth unblushing promise of glory. It shows how men may live as devils, and die as angels. It is just the religion which man wishes, but not the religion which man needs. It is the religion of earth surrounded with the drapery, and colored with the tints of real Christianity. It is the coin of Cæsar stamped with the image and the superscription of Jesus. It is the form of godliness, but the power of wickedness. It is Satan as an angel of light. Paganism is Satan going about as a roaring lion, but popery is Satan creeping in as a cunning serpent. Popery is the voice of Jacob, but the hand of Esau.

Before explaining the injunction in the text, we must lay down the nature of the weapons which we are to employ. These are not carnal,



but mighty to the pulling down of the strongholds of sin. The sword has been forged and tempered in heaven, and the breastplate is composed of righteousness, and the helmet of hope, and our feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. The less we employ the weapons of earth, the less we enlist human passion and power on our side, the more likely we are to attain ultimate success. Now, at all events, the national barriers are broken down — the national and glorious ramparts are removed, and Roman Catholics cannot complain of unfair play.

Now, then, put yourselves in array against Babylon. This phraseology does not imply that we are to stand inactive, until we are aroused by the peal of the trumpet, and the clang of conflict bursting on the ear. Inactivity is universally the precursor of defeat. While the husbandman slept, the enemy sowed the tares in the field ; while Saul slept, his weapon was stolen from his side ; while Samson slept, his hair, which was his strength, was shorn away : and if we sleep, our strength and our resources will be dissipated. You are now to make an active and aggressive movement on the battlements of Rome. You are now to open on her heaven's artillery. You are now to urge forward that ploughshare of God's truth, which will turn up her foundations to the withering influences of the winds and rains of heaven. If popery be not actively kept down, it will rapidly spring up. It is a creed indigenuous to our nature. This array commanded in the text, was formed by the Waldenses, when they dashed like waves of the sea, against the strongholds of popery, and retreated like the same, strown with the wreck of beauty, and strength, and health. This array was formed by the continental reformers when they sent forth the sound of the glorious gospel which destroyed the walls of Babylon, and razed some of her strongest bulwarks. This array was also formed by the English reformers, when, from the flames, and from the floods, and from the teeth of the lion, and the fangs of the serpent, they snatched the oracles of inspiration, and opened their blessed pages in the midst of open day ; and it will be a revival of their spirit and their times if we can prevail on the clergy of the three establishments to preach as becomes them, on the fourth day (Sunday) of October, 1835, which is the third centenary of the completion and publication of the first English Bible by Miles Coverdale, on the glorious privileges and blessings of the Reformation. This array was likewise formed by the Scottish reformers when they so thoroughly rooted out the man of sin from the land, that in 1611 there was but one aged Roman Catholic priest in Scotland, and about ten families professing the popish faith. Thermopylæ, and Marathon, and Trafalgar, and Waterloo, are not meet to be



mentioned in the same breath with these glorious triumphs, these embattled arrays of the noble army of reformers; and the names of Cæsar, and Themistocles, and Alexander, are not worthy to appear next to those of Luther, Calvin, Ridley, Knox, and others, of whom the world was not worthy. Onward, my brethren, in the steps of these martyred but mighty men, and under the shelter of the altars and monuments they raised, and by the graves under which their ashes repose; onward in the same glorious struggle, and put yourselves in determined array against Babylon.

“All ye that bend the bow shoot at her, and spare no arrows.” This appears to me to be the Spirit’s call to the ministers of the gospel. It is on them especially that the duty devolves of standing on the watch-towers of Zion, and of taking the lead in all the battles of the Lord. They are to bear forward that consecrated banner, under the inspiration of which are marshalled the saints of the Most High; and on no account to retreat till they are called from the arena of contest to the victor’s laurels, and the victor’s rest. Never will the Christianity of our Protestant people rise to its spring-tide strength while the Christianity of our Protestant priests continues so low and so superficial. Let us, then, “spare no arrows!” Let us use all legitimate weapons. These arrows are mentioned in Psalm xlv. 5, “Thine arrows are sharp in the hearts of the king’s enemies!” Some of these are feathered with love, and some with wrath; some are the terrors of the Lord, and others are the mercies of the Lord. We are to take one and all from the armory of heaven, and whether they produce plagues or wound but to save, we are to shoot them against Babylon. If there be anything likely to win in the promises of God — if any thing likely to alarm in the terrors of God — if any efficacy in prayer — if any blessing on means — we are to employ all these and spare none, for Babylon’s case is an almost desperate case. This instrumentality we are to employ *now*. We do not wait till the black cloud has covered the whole canopy of heaven before we run for shelter; we do not wait till the plague-spot has covered the whole body before we apply for an antidote and a cure; we do not wait till danger has attained its maximum before we labor to arrest or to anticipate it, — why, then, should the children of this world be wiser in their generation, than the children of light? The present crisis calls aloud for active and vigorous efforts. Spare no arrows — support every society that bears upon popery at home, aid and strengthen especially the British Reformation Society, which, in my opinion, is a noble and scriptural array — a glorious phalanx — a mighty vantage ground from which we may shoot the arrows of the Lord against Babylon. If we come short in our efforts now, we shall have to lament

our neglect when Babylon has reared her blasphemous head, diademed with the crowns she has filched from heaven and earth, and drunk with the blood of martyrs, and rejoicing in the strength and maturity which your apathy and liberalized notions have ministered to her. If it be any privilege to vindicate the glory of God, dishonored and eclipsed by an anti-Christian church — if there be any bowels of mercy toward the souls that are in jeopardy — if any patriotism, Christian patriotism, in the bosoms of men — if any obligation in the commandments of God — then put yourselves in array against Babylon, and the banner over you shall be love, and the rampart round you shall be omnipotence, and the glory of God shall be your reward. Protestantism bearded in the lands of its birth and its blessings — truth blended with fables, and popery threatening to subvert the Church of Ireland, that it may have more room to attack the Churches of England and Scotland, bid you note and ponder the injunction of the text. Let the fear of darkness enveloping these lands of yet unextinguished light — let the crown, the altar, and the constitution — let the cry of the martyrs from beneath the altar, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood” — let heaven and earth, let eternity and time, be heard, while they cry with one voice, “Put yourselves in array against Babylon round about ; all ye that bend the bow shoot at her, spare no arrows ; for she hath sinned against the Lord.”

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## SERMON XXX.

HUMAN AGENCY IN THE CONVERSION OF SINNERS.

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 BY REV. ROBERT YOUNG.  
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“ Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.” — JAMES v. 20.

THERE is no doctrine more prominently stated in the Holy Scriptures, or more strikingly exemplified in the experience of men, than that of human depravity. Revelation boldly asserts, that “all have sinned ;” and history, with its ten thousand tongues, substantiates the fact. Sin is an hereditary disease, entailed upon all the posterity of the first transgressor ; corrupting every faculty of the soul, and spreading its polluting and deadly influence through the whole mass of

human society. What was said of the Jews politically, may be said of the world spiritually: "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint." Hence appears the necessity of conversion. Men are guilty, and therefore exposed to the penalties of a violated law; unholy, and therefore totally unfit for the kingdom of heaven; and without conversion must consequently perish. Thank God! they may be converted; for the atonement of Christ, the promises of the gospel, and the influences of the Holy Ghost, bear their united testimony to this exhilarating truth. And to induce those who are happily converted, to labor for the conversion of others, the apostle says, "Let him know" — yes, let him know, for the direction of his talents, and the encouragement of his heart — "that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins."

Having this evening to plead the cause of The London Female Mission, the text selected for the occasion may be considered —

- I. *As describing the object which this mission contemplates;*
- II. *As investing its agents with authority for acting; and —*
- III. *As furnishing the most powerful motives to persevering zeal in its operations.*

I. The text may be considered as DESCRIBING THE OBJECT WHICH THE LONDON FEMALE MISSION CONTEMPLATES. Its object is not merely to protect, but to save; not only to reclaim from *one* vice, but from every vice, by "converting sinners from the error of their ways."

The parties for whose benefit this mission has been established, are found in the ways of error; for they "have forsaken the Guide of their youth, and forgotten the covenant of their God." Does *darkness* associate itself with error? They are as degenerate and deeply fallen creatures, said to "grope in darkness;" to have their eyes "blinded by the god of this world;" and to be thus rendered incapable of knowing themselves, and of "beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Does *impurity* associate itself with error? They are "altogether as an unclean thing;" and "the imaginations of their hearts are only evil, and that continually." Does *misery* associate itself with error? "Destruction and misery are in all their ways; the way of peace they know not;" and in a state of fearful disquietude "they go about, seeking rest, but find none." Does *danger* associate itself with error? The curse of a violated law, like the avenger of blood, is pursuing them; and we are assured, that "their feet go down to death, and their steps take hold on hell." Now, to "convert these sinners from the error of their ways," is to bring them from darkness to light;



from impurity to holiness ; from misery to happiness ; from danger to safety ; and in fact from Satan to God.

The change implied in the conversion of sinners is universal. There is a change in their *understanding* ; for “ God who commandeth light to shine out of darkness, shineth into their hearts,” “ opening the eyes of their understanding ” to know themselves, and the “ things which are freely given to them of God.” There is a change in their *will* ; for being subdued by a Divine power, they no longer resist the authority of their Maker, but humbly acquiesce in the plan of saving grace, and the various dispensations of Divine providence. There is a change in their *affections* ; for they no longer wander after forbidden objects, or “ cleave to the dust of the earth,” but are “ set on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.” There is a change in their *deportment* ; for having “ put off concerning the former conversation, the old man which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lust,” and having “ put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,” they “ walk righteously and godly and soberly in the present evil world.” There is a change in their *condition*. Formerly they were “ slaves to divers lusts and pleasure,” but are now free from the “ bondage of sin and death ;” they were the “ enemies of God by reason of wicked works,” but now are they his friends, and delight to do whatever he commands them ; they “ were the children of wrath even as others,” but now are they “ the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus,” and have “ received the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry Abba Father.” Such is the nature of scriptural conversion. It is not a partial change, but extends to every propensity and feeling of fallen nature. Sinners are not merely mended, but “ created anew in Christ Jesus.” They have as penitents approached the mercy-seat, and in the exercise of simple faith, obtained the forgiveness of their sins and an inheritance amongst them that are sanctified ; and thus “ old things have passed away, and all things become new.”

Now to accomplish this great work as extensively as possible, is the object contemplated by The London Female Mission. If the class of persons this mission seeks to benefit, be not sincerely converted to God, no scriptural hope can be entertained of their permanent recovery. To attempt the reformation of such characters independently of conversion, would in general, if not always, be found to be as unavailing as the putting “ new cloth into an old garment ;” for such efforts would in all probability be so perverted by them, as to make the moral rent worse. You cannot give them any principle sufficiently powerful to secure their permanent reformation, whilst their old offending nature



remains ; for how can you expect the fruit to be good, while the tree is corrupt ? the streams to be pure, while the fountain remains polluted ? The experiment of producing a good life, in connection with an evil heart of unbelief, has been repeatedly tried, but always failed. In a large provincial town in the North, there is an extensive penitentiary, very liberally supported ; but as it does not make conversion to God, by faith in Christ Jesus, the foundation of the permanent recovery of its numerous inmates, I regret to say, that many of them after having filled up their probation, and left the institution, are unable to resist temptations to vice, and in a short time return to their former ways, and in some instances become more vile than before. Another institution was established, of which I had the honor to be secretary ; and as it was established on the principle that conversion to God is indispensable to the permanent rescue of unfortunate females, we kept none under its care who did not give evidence of a sincere desire, not only to forsake *one* sin, but every sin, and to save their souls ; and such was its management, as to render it almost impossible for any but the truly penitent to remain long under its control. During the first year of the society's labors, the Divine blessing was so richly communicated, that *seventy females* were rescued from the grasp of the destroyer ; two of whom died happy in the Lord, eighteen were restored to their friends, and thirty-two, placed in situations where in general they gave satisfaction, and all of them afforded encouraging evidence of true conversion. We never thought of sending a female from under the society's care, either to her relations or to a situation, without having reason to believe that she had experienced a saving change ; and although in some cases we were deceived, yet generally speaking we had cause to rejoice over those who professed to obtain salvation. See, therefore, my dear friends, that you never lose sight of this principle in the operations of the London Female Mission ; but labor to bring the objects of your charity to a saving acquaintance with your Redeemer. Let not the character of their crimes, or the depth of their depravity, discourage you ; for Christ is "mighty to save." Do you say that their "sins are as scarlet ?" God says, "They shall be as white as snow." Do you say that "they are red like crimson ?" God says, "They shall be as wool." Do you say that the objects of your charity are "five hundred pence debtors ?" God says he will "frankly forgive them all." Nor should you forget, that he who hath said "Publicans and harlots shall enter into the kingdom of heaven," graciously beheld, in the days of his humiliation —

—— "A harlot in distress ;  
Dried up her tears, her pardon seal'd,  
And bade her go in peace."

It is worthy of remark, that the first convert in the great revival of religion which took place in America, under the ministry of President Edwards and his contemporaries, was an unfortunate female ; and her conversion was made a blessing to many thousands. Mr. Edwards says — “ God made it the greatest occasion of awakening to others, of anything that ever came to pass in the town. The news of it seemed almost like a flash of lightning upon the hearts of young people, and upon many others.” And the result of the revival so commenced, was estimated to be the conversion of thirty thousand souls.

II. THE TEXT MAY BE CONSIDERED AS INVESTING THE AGENTS OF THE LONDON FEMALE MISSION WITH AUTHORITY FOR ACTING.

It assumes that it is the duty of Christians to labor according to their respective abilities, for the conversion of sinners ; not merely ministers, but private members. For it was not to ministers, but the church generally, that the apostle addressed himself in the words before us ; and thus recognised the principle of lay-agency in the conversion of sinners, as being consistent with apostolic order. Here, then, is your authority for acting ; and which no advocate of apostolic succession, is able to take from you.

This view of the subject is supported by other considerations, upon which we shall now enter.

1. Your duty to labor for the conversion of souls, may be argued from *the method of Jehovah's government.*

It appears to be a principle in the Divine administration, for God to accomplish what man cannot accomplish ; but not to perform what man can perform. See this principle exemplified in nature. God does not cultivate the soil, or deposit the seed therein, because man can do that ; but he gives the fruit of the earth in all its variety and richness, and thus effects what man cannot effect. See this exemplified in the miracles of our Lord. Take his raising Lazarus for an example. When he had come to the tomb of his servant, he directed his attendants to roll away the stone ; and when he had restored his friend to life, he farther instructed them to “ loose him and let him go.” Now he that raised Lazarus from the dead, could have easily rolled away the stone and loosed his servant from his bands ; but these were things which man could do ; and our Lord, on that deeply interesting occasion, absolutely performed nothing but what man could not perform. Now this appears to be the principle upon which he acts in the conversion of sinners. It is true, that you cannot of yourselves do any good thing, much less convert sinners from the error of their ways, as that is a Divine work ; yet you can humbly, and in dependence upon spiritual aid, employ the

means which God has appointed for that important end. And we maintain, that you have no more authority to expect that God will convert sinners whilst the use of those means is neglected, than the husbandman has authority to expect a plentiful harvest whilst he neglects to cultivate his land and sow his seed.

The truth of God, presented to the mind, is the great instrument of conversion ; and it does not appear that a sinner can be converted and saved independently of the truth of God. For instance : are men born again ? It is " not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible ; even the word of the Lord, which liveth and abideth for ever." Are they sanctified ? It is " through the truth." Are they " made clean ?" It is " through the words which Christ speaks unto them." Hence the absolute necessity of teaching, and consequently of human agency in the conversion of sinners. It is undoubtedly your duty, as Christians, to make known, in some way, and to the extent of which you are capable, the vital doctrines of the gospel to those persons whose conversion you desire ; and thus to furnish that divinely appointed instrument, by which the Holy Ghost awakens, converts and saves. For this purpose you are directed to teach the words of the law " diligently unto your children ; and to talk of them when you sit in the house and when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up." You are " in any wise to rebuke your neighbor, and not suffer sin upon your brother ;" to " do and teach the commandments of God ;" to " say every man to his neighbor, Know ye the Lord ;" and, in fact, to be " teachers of all good things." Nor is this all ; for as intercessory prayer offered to God, as well as religious truth presented to the mind of man, is an instrument of conversion, it becomes your duty also to pray for the conversion of sinners. " The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much ;" and it is clearly intimated in the context, that it may not only " save the sick," but avail in the " conversion of a sinner from the error of his ways."

2. Your duty to labor for the conversion of sinners, may be argued from *the spirit and tendency of experimental Christianity*. It not only qualifies its recipients for this important work, by giving them knowledge, love, and meekness, but inspires them with a sincere and ardent desire to be so employed. For the truth of this, we might refer you to Andrew, who, on finding the Messiah, hastened home to bring his brother Simon. We might refer you to Saul of Tarsus, who, on obtaining salvation, immediately went forth to recommend it to his countrymen. We might refer you to the martyrs, and confessors, whose hearts so ardently desired the conversion of their persecutors, that they were manifestly more concerned for that than their own safety. We might



refer you to the truly pious, in every age of the world, who have wept and prayed and labored in various ways to effect the conversion of sinners. But we need not go further than this assembly for witnesses of this truth; each Christian present being such a witness. When you first felt the love of God shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto you, how did you feel respecting impenitent sinners? Did you not earnestly desire their conversion? You did; and if you obeyed the impulse of your new nature, you strove to effect that conversion. I appeal to your consciences for the truth of this. Nor was this feeling intended to resemble the mountain torrent, that soon exhausts itself; but the steady flowing stream, deepening and widening as it advances in its course. If you have lost this feeling, you cannot have retained your religion, it being inseparably connected therewith; for "he that loveth God must love his brother also," and cannot but desire and labor for his conversion. If such, therefore, be the tendency of religion — if it excite an ardent desire for the conversion of sinners, as well as invest you with moral capabilities for this important work — what is the fair and legitimate conclusion forced upon us, but that you ought to be thus employed? If you are not, you will certainly prove unfaithful to your principles, hide your talent in the earth, resist the Spirit's influence, and thereby greatly endanger your own safety.

3. Your duty to labor for the conversion of sinners, may be argued from *the history of the church*. Church history records the conversion of myriads of sinners — sinners of every character, and age, and nation, and grade in society — and places them before us as the trophies of redeeming grace. And do you ask, by what agency so many sinners have been converted from the error of their ways? Perhaps in some cases God may have effected the blessed work independently of human agency, although that is by no means evident; but it is very clear that his *usual*, if not his *invariable* course, has been to employ that agency. If ever there had been a period when human agency was unnecessary, it must surely have been on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost descended upon the disciples; but even then, it was not dispensed with in the conversion of the three thousand souls, who, on that memorable occasion, were added to the Lord. They had mockingly witnessed the effects of the Spirit's manifestation, and were not "pricked in their hearts" until they heard the Gospel message from the lips of Peter. Then, and not till then, did they discover their sin and danger, and exclaim, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Nor can we find a conversion to God after that period, on record in the New Testament, in which human agency of some description was not employed. Was the Ethiopian eunuch converted? The Spirit



directed Philip to join himself to his chariot, and to preach unto him Jesus, that he might understand what he was reading ; and the eunuch "believed with all his heart," was baptized, and "went on his way rejoicing." Was Saul, of Tarsus, converted? Ananias was commanded to go into the street, which was called "Straight," and in the house of one Judas, to put his hands upon him, that he might receive his sight, and "be filled with the Holy Ghost." Was Cornelius, and his household, converted? Peter was instructed in a vision to go down to Cesarea to tell them words whereby they might be saved ; and "while he yet spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." Now in each of these cases of conversion, the Divine being had nearly effected the glorious work himself, but did not complete it without human agency ; as if to testify to his church, throughout all generations, that it is his rule to bless man by man, and to make "the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty."

If we examine the annals of the church from that period to the present, we shall find that families and tribes and even nations, have been converted by means of human agency ; and sometimes by that, which in the estimation of the world has been the most weak and contemptible. Hence we are told, that the king and queen of the ancient Iberia, a province in Asia, were brought to embrace the Christian faith by means of a captive woman ; and this event led to the conversion of nearly all their subjects. But we may come nearer home, even to our own experience and observation, for evidences of the truth we seek to establish. There are in this congregation, I have no doubt, many persons who have been converted from the error of their ways ; and perhaps there is not one here, in whose conversion human agency has been entirely precluded. He who addresses you was convinced of sin, and led to the Savior for pardon and acceptance, by the humble but fervent exertions of a lay preacher. Like some others, he "went to mock, but remained to pray." And if you recur to the circumstances of your conversion, you will probably find that it was the sermon of some minister, the biography of some saint, the advice or reproof of some friend, the shining light of some devoted Christian, or the fervent prayer of some sincere disciple, which first awakened you to a sense of your condition, and led you to "flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before you." Or if, in the first instance, you were directly moved by the Spirit without any apparent human agency being employed, we venture to assert, that some Philip, Ananias, or Peter was called in by your blessed Savior, as a subordinate agent, as a worker together with him, in the completion of your conversion. Indeed the whole history of the Christian Church proves, that man,

feeble man, is God's selected agent in the accomplishment of his glorious purposes of grace. And this is distinctly and clearly assumed, by the different religious and benevolent institutions of the day, which concentrate so much human agency with the view of enlightening and saving the world. Bible, Missionary, Tract and Sunday-school societies, all recognize and act upon this principle; and this is the principle upon which you, as the agents of the London Female Mission, are authorized and encouraged to put forth your most vigorous exertions in behalf of perishing thousands, and to endeavor to "save them with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."

Now, brethren, if these things be so, if the method of the Divine Government, the spirit and tendency of religion, the history of the church, and the declarations of the Book of God, prove that it is your duty to exert your powers in the conversion of sinners — how awfully great is your responsibility! May you feel it. Remember you cannot occupy a neutral position here; for "he that gathereth not with me," saith Christ, "scattereth abroad." If you do not co-operate with Christ in the great work of saving souls, you do not on that account remain neutral, but place yourselves, by your very omission of duty, in opposition to their salvation; and instead of converting sinners from the error of their ways, and saving souls from death, you "destroy those for whom Christ died, and the blood of souls will be found on the skirts of your garments." "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

III. The text may be considered as furnishing the London Female Mission with THE MOST POWERFUL MOTIVES TO PERSEVERING ZEAL IN ITS OPERATIONS. "He shall save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins."

1. "He that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death." And who can estimate the value of a soul? We may form some conception of its worth, if we contemplate its *origin*, as proceeding in a peculiar way from God; its *capacity*, as being capable of knowing, serving, loving, and enjoying its maker in this world, and in that which is to come; its *redemption*, as being "redeemed, not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ;" and its *immortality*, as being destined not only to exist through all succeeding generations, but for ever and for ever. Now on the conversion of a sinner, such a soul is saved from *spiritual death*. In its unrenewed state it is said to be "dead in trespasses and sins;" and very properly so, for as natural death implies a separation between the body and the soul, so spiritual death implies a separation

between the soul and its Maker ; but on its conversion a resurrection takes place. He who is the Resurrection and the Life approaches, and with authority and power exclaims, "Come forth !" — and the soul at once feels the vital principle, heaves with Divine animation, and thus passes from death unto life. The converted sinner now lives ; and it is the "life of faith in the Son of God, who hath loved him and given himself for him ;" and he performs the various functions and enjoys the inestimable blessings of a spiritual existence. But on the conversion of a sinner, a soul is saved from *eternal death* ; from blackness and darkness ; from tribulation and wrath ; from fire and brimstone ; from the worm that dieth not ; from weeping and wailing, and from gnashing of teeth. Such are some of the Scripture characteristics of death — eternal death — death which never dies, and to which every unconverted sinner is exposed. If on the death of a soul, both man and beast should be clothed with sackcloth — if all creatures capable of emotion, should join in the loud and doleful lamentation — if every tree of the forest and herb of the field should immediately droop like the weeping willow — if every dew drop should be mingled with blood, to indicate the agony of maternal nature, and if the sun should put on his funeral robes as the first mourner on the occasion — the expression of sorrow would indeed be affecting, but it would fall far short of giving us any adequate conception of the misery occasioned by the loss of a soul. And will you not endeavor to save a soul from death ? Brethren, if you saw your neighbor's house on fire, would you not hasten to quench the flame ? If you saw a fellow-creature drowning, would you not plunge into the river to his rescue, or furnish him with some means of escape ? Or if you saw numbers in the city dying of the plague, and you possessed an infallible remedy, would you not apply it without delay, that the plague might be stayed ? But what is the saving of burning houses, drowning men, or dying multitudes, compared with the saving of one soul from death ? He who saves a soul from death, performs a greater work than he who saves a land from famine, a city from the plague, and a country from an invading foe. Then, bring all your capabilities to bear upon this important and momentous work. Have you talents at your command ? in this work let them be employed. Have you influence in the world ? in this work let it be exerted. Have you zeal in your hearts ? in this work let it ardently burn. Have you devotion in your spirits ? in this work let it ascend to the throne of heaven. Have you wealth at your disposal ? in this work let it be liberally expended. Men ! Brethren ! Patriots ! Christians ! By what inspiring name shall I call you ? Your duty is plain ; and for its performance, humanity is entreating, and Christian-



ity exhorting, importuning, and commanding. The case is urgent; for sinners are perishing whilst I am speaking — perishing by thousands — perishing within the reach of help — perishing in your city, and at your doors! Every man therefore to his work; and what you do, do quickly, do it with your might; do it in spite of all opposition, and upon your heads shall abundantly descend the blessings of them that are ready to perish.

As the agents are supporters of the London Female Mission, you have in this a most powerful motive to zeal and perseverance in your important and deeply interesting operations.

2. “He that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall” also “*hide a multitude of sins.*” Every sinner is guilty of a multitude of sins — sins of omission, and sins of commission — sins of the heart, sins of the lips, sins of the life; but when conversion takes place, all those sins are covered by the great propitiatory sacrifice — are blotted out by the precious blood of Christ, and Divine justice sees them no more. But the word rendered “hide,” is susceptible of another meaning, and I am much inclined to believe that its meaning in the text is to *withhold* from sight, rather than to *withdraw* from sight, or to hide by *prevention*, rather than by *covering*. If this interpretation be adopted, the text will certainly read more naturally, “He shall save a soul from death, and prevent a multitude of sins.” One sinner, we are told, destroys much good; and this may especially be said of one of those unhappy females, whose salvation this society seeks to accomplish; but when converted, a multitude of sins are prevented; and not only sins which she would have committed, but sins in others, who might have been influenced by her example, or been so unfortunate as to fall into her snares. Had any person succeeded in converting Voltaire, Hume, Paine, Robert Owen, or even certain degraded females, whose “paths incline unto death,” and “whose guests are in the depths of hell,” what infidelity, what blasphemy, what intemperance, what lasciviousness, what murders, and other forms of vice, ruining many families, breaking many hearts, and destroying many souls, would have been prevented! And on the other hand, what multitudes of sins have been prevented by the agents, who led Luther, and Wesley, and Whitefield, and other successful ministers, to the foot of the cross, and the enjoyment of salvation! — sins, which might have brought the fearful judgments of heaven upon families, communities, and nations! Brethren, if you wish to benefit not only the present generation, but generations yet unborn, and to give a moral impulse to the world that shall live when you are dead, labor to convert a sinner. There was a woman in the attire of a harlot, walk-



ing in yonder street, alluring those who were void of understanding, and "casting down many wounded; yea, many strong men were slain by her; for her house was the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death;" but by the blessing of God upon the exertions of the London Female Mission, she was awakened and converted. The event excited but little interest in this degenerate world; there was no ringing of bells, no flourishing of trumpets, no firing of cannon, no illumination of the city, no display of fire works; nor was any medal struck to commemorate the glorious occurrence. And yet, it excited a deeper interest among the angelic host, than all the exploits of bravery, that mark the battle field, and throw whole nations into ecstasies of joy; for while angels pass by all those exploits without ever once stopping to strike their lyre, they rapturously sung the heavenly chorus, and throughout all their shining ranks rejoiced over that one repenting sinner. In the conversion of that unhappy female, you gave a moral impulse to society, which in a few years may be felt at the very antipodes, and at last appear in tens of thousands of glorified spirits at the right hand of God. What a motive is this for perseverance and energy in the operations of the London Female Mission!

In conclusion, we remark —

1. That the exertions of the London Female Mission are *much required*. It is stated on what is deemed good authority, that there are within the precincts of this city not fewer than eighty thousand females living upon the wages of their iniquity, supported at an expense of eight millions annually, or something more than twenty thousand pounds per day; and that one out of every three of the daughters of persons in the humbler walks of life are found to associate with these outcasts of society before they have attained the age of twenty years. Oh! that I had the authors of this appalling evil now before me. I would not only tell them with tears of the numerous families they have ruined, the many hearts they have broken, and the unnumbered souls they have destroyed; but I would implore help of God to seize their blood-stained spirits, and shake them over the pit of hell, that the wailings of their victims might rouse them to a sense of their sins and danger. It is certainly impossible for Christians, jealous for the honor of God, and concerned for the benefit of man, to look upon the state of our metropolis with stoicism, or refuse their co-operation in efforts to renovate it. Ours is the city of the plague; and if something be not done to stay it in its deadly progress — if the pious rush not in between the living and the dead — it may reach our own families, poison our own cup, and this great and wealthy metropolis may become as Admah, and be made like unto Zeboim. Men of

Israel, help! Humanity cries, Help! Patriotism cries, Help! Christianity cries, Help! And hark, a voice issues from yonder wretched garret, where there is one, who was formerly beautiful, amiable, modest, and the joy of her parents' hearts; but in the hour of temptation, she fell, and is now degraded, forsaken, broken-hearted, perishing; and oh! hear her, for she cries for — Help!

The usages of society are such, that when a female wanders from the path of virtue, and abandons herself to a course of infamy, she is prevented from returning to virtuous society, and must in all probability perish in the ways of error, and be lost for ever, independently of the kind interposition of this or some kindred institution. She may be disgusted with her mode of life, and earnestly desire to forsake it, as is the case with many such characters; but where can she go? Her relations, if she have any, feeling that she has so greatly dishonored them, refuse to afford her shelter, and even disown her. She is without character, and what family, in her present state, will engage her as a servant? If charity do not therefore stretch forth its kind helping hand, what, we ask, is to become of her? We do not sketch a fictitious picture, but believe this to be the true state of thousands in this metropolis. Many are laboring to destroy them; and will no one labor to save them? Millions are annually expended to hasten their souls to hell; and shall little or nothing comparatively be given to save them from that place of torment? Exasperated relations spurn them from their presence; virtuous families refuse to employ and shelter them; and must they look in vain to the followers of the benevolent Jesus, for sympathy and refuge? The London Female Mission says, No! The views which have now been given, led to the establishment of this institution. May you also be so impressed with them, as to afford the Mission your utmost countenance and support, in its varied forms and modes of operation.

2. The exertions of the London Female Mission have been *beneficial*. This society has met with various forms of opposition; but the Divine blessing has manifestly rested upon it. It has rescued many a victim from the grasp of the destroyer; bound up many a broken heart; healed many a wounded spirit; reclaimed many a wandering prodigal; protected many a virtuous female; and saved many a perishing soul. Since its establishment in November, 1836\* *three hundred and five* young women have been rescued from an evil course of life. This mission contemplates two objects; for it not only seeks, by the Divine blessing, the restoration of the fallen to their families and to their God, but it aims to preserve the virtuous from the snares and dangers to

\* This sermon was preached Oct. 1, 1840.

which they are exposed. For the accomplishment of the former object, it has established a "*Probationary House*," in which there are at present forty-five females; and three "*District Asylums*," in which there are one hundred and forty-four females. For the accomplishment of the latter object, it not only forms "*Girls' Associations*," under the control and direction of Christian ladies, with the view of cultivating moral habits, and checking in its incipient state, and while under the parental roof, every tendency to female profligacy; and provides "*Temporary Refuges for indigent young women*," who are employed, instructed, and supported, until permanent situations can be obtained for them; but it has established "*Servant's Homes and Registries*," where such as are out of place, but have not forfeited their character, are provided with comfortable lodgings at a moderate charge, and where a registry is kept to facilitate their obtaining situations. It also issues two monthly publications, and several tracts, all greatly calculated to promote its benevolent objects. In its labors of love, it knows no distinction of sect or party, of color or clime, but simply aims, under the blessing of the Most High, to diminish the amount of wretchedness and moral degradation to be found in London, and as far as possible to elevate the standard of female character; and were its funds more ample, it might greatly enlarge the sphere of its operations. The committee of this institution earnestly invite the attention of the benevolent to the following facts: — "From January 1st, 1839, to January 1st, 1840, a period of one year, the number of young women who applied to be admitted into the Asylum of the London Female Mission was 404; of these, 109 were received; the remaining number were sent away principally for want of room, the house then rented by the Mission being able to accommodate only thirty inmates. Since that period, a larger house, capable of receiving eighty beds, has been purchased, and furnished for forty-eight females; to which number the advantage of the institution is now extended. But though the operations of the society, in this department of benevolence, has been greatly enlarged, and the managers feel that they have advanced to the full extent their funds will allow, yet the number of applicants for the society's aid, is still so great, as to amount, in the short space of three days, to twenty-five in number; to all of whom the committee were obliged to say, "We cannot receive you." What! are they then to return to their haunts of vice and misery? thus to be repulsed in their attempts to escape from ruin? We cannot receive you! Who then will receive them? If they have knocked at the door of a Christian institution, and have been refused admittance, though they asked for it with tears of penitence in their eyes, and in the name of the sin-



ner's Friend, what door will open to take them in? We cannot receive you! "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon," that in the metropolis of the Christian world where truth has triumphed and martyrs have bled, in three days twenty-five females applied to a number of Christian ladies and gentlemen, to interpose their aid to save them from wretchedness and hell, and were refused that aid. We cannot receive you! Indeed it was true; and no person's feelings can be more deeply affected with the rejection of those females, than were the feelings of the committee of the London Female Mission, in being *necessitated*, by their *exhausted funds*, to deny the assistance and protection sought for. The committee bring the case of these twenty-five hapless females before you to-night; and will you, as a Christian congregation, refuse to replenish their funds, and thus practically say to so many imploring outcasts, "We cannot receive you?" What! must they then be abandoned to ruin, descend into the pit, and bitterly exclaim, as it closes upon them, "No man cared for our souls?" Remember, you must meet them at the bar of God; and if you refuse them help, and they should in consequence be lost, how will you encounter their penetrating and upbraiding glance, as they turn from the judgment seat to meet their awful doom? Will you rather save money, than immortal souls? Your money perish with you; for if this be your feeling, it is easy to perceive that you are "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." A piercing cry for assistance has this evening reached you; and "if you forbear to deliver them that are drawn into death, and those that are ready to be slain; if you say, Behold, we knew it not; doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it? and He that keepeth the soul, doth He not know it? and shall not He render to every man according to his works?"



# SERMON XXXI.

THE GLORY OF THE GOSPEL.

BY REV. T. ADKINS.

“The glorious gospel of the blessed God.”—1 TIMOTHY, i. 11.

MAN is an ambitious being: the desire of attaining to some species of real or imaginary excellence is intimately interwoven with the very texture of the human mind. This desire commences with the earliest dawn of our conscious existence — as soon as we are capable of forming an opinion respecting our actions and our possible circumstances: and it remains with us through every subsequent stage of our life; stimulating us to future attainments, and holding out the prospect of greater good.

But the entrance of sin has beclouded our faculty of spiritual perception, and vitiated our moral taste: and hence many seek happiness in that which is not in itself essentially “glorious;” but which only tends to augment the suffering, and to increase the misery of the heart. There are individuals who possess such a perspicacity of pride as to discover in themselves excellences imperceptible to any eye but their own. There are those who are so disposed to attain to elevation, that they are content to occupy a position, even though it be on a dunghill, if they can but secure the attention of their fellow men. There are others who, having no virtues to plume themselves with, boast of their very vices, and glory in their shame.

My brethren, I have this evening to put before you an object, not of imaginary, but of real glory; an object, the transcendent splendor of which surpasses all that human ambition ever panted after, or human success ever won. All the productions of nature, and all the events of time — all that has been achieved by the ingenuity of man, or the majesty of God himself, is veiled before its transcendent splendor: and in reference to them we may say, what the apostle said in reference to the comparative splendor of the two dispensations — that the former had no glory “by reason of the glory that excelleth.” O that this evening each of us may purge our abused vision at the fountain of heavenly radiance, that we may be blessed with spiritual perception to behold the unequalled splendor of that, respecting which it is declared, by the voice of infallible truth, that it is “the glorious gospel of the blessed God.”

The expression rendered, "blessed," might, with no less propriety, have been translated "the happy gospel." And this suggests to us an important train of thought. All holy beings are happy; and all happy beings are benevolent: they are happy just in proportion as they are holy; and they are benevolent just in proportion as they are happy. Angels are holier than men, and therefore they are more happy, and more benevolent. Unallied to us by the ordinary sympathies of a common nature, they yet take an intense interest in all that relates to the well-being of man. God is the holiest being, and therefore he is the happiest; and, being the happy God, he is the most benevolent being in the universe; and his own happiness is augmented whilst he is diffusing felicity through countless myriads of intelligent beings.

By "the gospel," I understand that revelation of mercy in which the Deity, through the substitution and sacrifice of his Son, condescends to bestow blessings on a lost and ruined world. It is *the gospel*, because it is *glad tidings*; glad tidings, inasmuch as it is a scheme through which the Deity bestows the greatest blessings on man—bestows them in a manner correspondent with the perfection of his own nature, and in a manner adapted to the moral impotence of our own.

Instead, however, of occupying your time with any prefatory remarks respecting the nature and constitution of this gospel, I proceed to seize on the distinguishing feature which the apostle places before us, and remind you that it is "the *glorious* gospel:" and it is so BECAUSE IT IS A SYSTEM OF ETERNAL TRUTH, IN WHICH THE MORAL PERFECTIONS OF THE GODHEAD ARE MOST TRANSCENDENTLY DISPLAYED. There is but one being in the universe that is self-existent and dependent, and who, consequently, can make his own glory the ultimate object of his existence: and that being is God. Consequent obligation is the condition on which man receives his existence: "No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself: for whether we live, we live to the Lord; and whether we die, we die to the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." The sun shines, not for his own glory, but for the glory of him who has placed him as a lamp in the firmament of heaven, and for the benefit of those minor orbs that roll round in infinite space. Some men are suns, and others are only stars; but all are compelled to shine—to shine, not for their own glory, but for the glory of Him who has fixed them in their appointed spheres. And there is a propriety in all this. If a finite creature were to seek his own glory, he would make an attempt to vault into the very throne, and invade the very prerogative of heaven; he would aim at that which does not belong to the creature,

because *his* glory cannot be the greatest good. But for the Deity to aim at this object, and to achieve it, is for him to achieve the greatest good: and at the very moment that this is enhanced to its highest splendor, it becomes the medium through which, in a proportionate degree, the happiness of the moral universe is enhanced.

Now, in reference to this "glorious gospel," we say, that *in it all the perfections of the Divine nature are strikingly displayed*. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work." The dread magnificence of the stars — the beauty of the varying seasons — the living millions that swim in the seas, that float in the air, that graze in the field, or, in endless combination of color and form, people the regions of infinite space — speak of a present and a presiding God. But, brethren, where is the record of pardon? Where is the proof of forgiving mercy? It is neither written by the sun-beam, nor wafted by the breeze. The sea says, "It is not in me:" all nature says, "It is not in me." "Canst thou, by searching, find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" These are past man's understanding: how small a portion is known to him! But when we turn to this "glorious gospel," we see the Deity full robed, in his round of rays complete. In it we see exemplified what is profound in wisdom, inflexible in justice, awful in dignity, and touching in compassion, in their individual excellence, and in their harmonious combination.

But in this "glorious gospel" there is, besides the exhibition of all the perfections of the Godhead, *the most striking development of them*. For though all the attributes of the Godhead are infinite, yet their manifestation may be varied in an endless diversity of degrees and forms: but in this "glorious gospel" there is the most striking display of the whole. Let us look at these perfections of the Divine nature as philosophers do at a ray of light, through the medium of prism: let us resolve them into their original elements (if I may be allowed the expression), and bring them to this test: and we shall point them towards this "glorious gospel:" there is the most striking display of all the attributes of Jehovah.

Is *love* an attribute of the Divine nature? God is love: he is benevolence itself; it dwells in him as its proper seat; it springs from him as its proper source; and ever actuates him as a vital and immortal principle. We see it in the fragrance that regales our senses, and in the beauty that charms our eye: as Paley has delightfully said, "Pain is the exception — happiness is the rule:" and in all the varied forms of happiness in which the countless myriads of God's creatures that



people this lower world do possess and exhibit it, we see so many indications of the truth of the maxim that "God is love."

But this is only as a taper to the sun, compared with the exhibition of eternal love in the cross of the Son of God. That such a sacrifice should be offered — O, this comes home to our souls with melting and with mighty persuasion. It is not merely that "we have redemption," but, "we have redemption *through his blood.*" It is not merely that we have eternal life, but that that life cost the Son of God his own. And whether we consider the magnitude of the blessings that we receive, or the price at which they were purchased, it is such a display of divine love as we shall be occupied through the countless ages of eternity in endeavoring to comprehend. Hence it has been beautifully said that it is "the noon-tide of meridian compassion;" it is "the everlasting display of everlasting love." And hence the apostle of the Gentiles, when he would give us an exhibition of the love of God, does not take us to some lofty mountain, and there spread before us, in beautiful perspective, all the majestic attractions of nature; but he takes us to the foot of Calvary, and, pointing us to the illustrious sufferer, he says, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and gave his Son to be a propitiation for our sins."

Is justice an attribute of Divine nature? Where do we see it displayed so effectually as in "the glorious gospel of the blessed God!" Justice is that attribute of his nature by which he is made to assign to every intelligent and accountable being that which is his due. He has evinced his righteous displeasure against sin in a thousand striking forms. I see it engraven on the arms that are washed on the shores of the Red Sea: I see it in those cities of the Plain that are the blighted and blasted monuments of the eternal ire of God: I see it in that abode where "the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;" where prayer is unavailing, where repentance is ineffectual, where mercy is unknown.

But in each, in *all* of these, I have not so awful an exhibition of the inflexible justice of God, as when I go to the affecting scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary. There he hangs, rent with wounds, and racked with pain; his bones dislocated, his nerves convulsed. A gushing crimson tide flows from his bleeding heart: it trickles down his sacred body; it stains with purple the very ground on which his cross stands. It is noon; and yet it is awfully dark. "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*" "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And why is all this? O, brethren, it is justice sheathing its sword in the heart of mercy: it is Jehovah's Son bearing a weight of woe which none but Omnipotence could inflict, and none but Omnipotence could bear.



And if I wish for a display, either of the justice of Jehovah, or the moral turpitude of sin, I must view it in the cross of Christ.

Is *wisdom* an attribute of the Divine nature? Where have we such a display of it as in "the glorious gospel of the blessed God?" Wisdom consists in selecting the most suitable objects, and in adopting the most efficient means for the attainment of those objects. Now, in this gospel, the Deity has abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence. I can very well conceive of holy and happy beings conferring kindness on holy and happy beings in return: but it is left to the wisdom of the cross to exhibit the medium in which a being of unsullied holiness can, compatibly with the claims of justice, pardon the guilty and save the lost. I can very well conceive how mercy can pardon the offender, or how justice can punish his sin: but it is left to the mysterious development of Calvary to unfold the method by which, while the Eternal Legislator maintains, unimpaired, the equity of his moral government, he adopts into his family, and bestows all the marks of love upon that very offender who has trampled on his authority, and hurled defiance at his throne. Here, then, we have the most vivid display of all the perfections of the Godhead.

We must, however, advance a step further: here is *the most harmonious exhibition of the perfections of the Godhead*. It is necessary for the divine glory, that all the attributes of the Godhead should be illustrated in harmony with each other, and that the scheme of mercy itself should be constructed on the principles of immutable justice. Supposing that there exists a law; that that law has been violated; and that the Divine Legislator determines to pardon the offender: it is obvious to a demonstration that he can only do this, compatibly with the claims of justice, through the medium of substitution and of atonement, and putting the offender under a course of moral discipline. Were Jehovah to bestow the blessing of eternal life through any medium which allowed his holiness to be sullied, or his veracity to be impeached, such an exhibition would not be *the gospel*; because the interests of a part — and that, peradventure, a very small part of the intelligent universe, and that even a guilty part — would be advanced at the expense of the whole: for the various orders of intelligent beings might, from that very moment, imagine that they could, with impunity, trample on his authority, and hurl defiance at his throne. Such an act of indiscriminate lenity, therefore, would not be *the gospel*, but a mere substitute for it, unworthy the character of the Deity, and unadapted to the moral necessities of the universe.

There is, then, the great problem to be solved — How can God be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly? How can sin be pardoned,

and yet punished? How can the law be maintained in its authority, and the violator of that law be rescued from unrepealable and eternal death? From the depth of the Everlasting Mind there arose that scheme by which all these important ends were attained. The Everlasting Son of the Everlasting Father stooped from his throne in the heavens, and he became the weeping babe in the manger of Bethlehem, the weary traveller in the journey of life, the agonizing sufferer in the garden of Gethsemane, the spotless victim on the accursed tree. And when, by the mysterious oblation on the cross, once offered, he had harmonized all the attributes of the Godhead in one triumphant act of mercy, he opened a medium by which — compatibly with the claims of eternal justice, that looked so high and made so rigid a demand — he could pour the blessings of eternal salvation on the very vilest of the vile. Brethren, this is the moral glory of the Gospel; and this is the glory of ministers, that they have to preach it. Let the wise man glory in his wisdom; let the rich man glory in his riches; let the strong man glory in his strength; God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Nor is this a useless speculation; it is as important as it is true. For the moral character of the Deity is at the foundation of all virtue. If that were to be sullied, virtue would have no foundation, hell would have no terror, obedience would have no authority and no rule. If you could shake the character of the Deity, you would shake his very throne, and unhinge the moral harmony of the universe itself. Therefore it is of the highest importance, not only to the happiness of creatures in this inferior world, but to intelligences that occupy the illimitable regions of the universal government; it is essential to each and to all, that there be a correct exhibition of the character of God. And not only so, but it bears a most beneficial aspect upon the moral happiness of beings like ourselves. For if you and I were to cherish expectations of future happiness that were not to be built on the foundation of the divine glory, and to be cherished only in proportion as that glory was tarnished, then our hope must terminate in despair. But, when a scheme is resolved upon, is brought before us, is explained to us, in which, at the very moment that Jehovah pardons the guilty and saves the lost, he does, at that time and through that medium, only add an additional ray to his own ineffable grandeur and glory, then despondency itself may hope, and the most forlorn of the human race may cherish a well founded hope of everlasting salvation.

But I must advance to the second part of the discourse, and remind you that this is “the glorious gospel of the blessed God,” BECAUSE IT

IS ADMIRABLY ADAPTED TO THE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL NECESSITIES OF MAN. Those necessities are vast and varied ; but there is no want that it cannot supply, no guilt that it cannot pardon, no depth of misery which it cannot explore.

View man under all the phases of his existence, and you will find there is the fullest adaptation in this gospel to each and to all. Man is an ignorant being ; ignorance is the offspring of guilt ; and when man became a sinner, his mental vision was beclouded. As sin diffused itself, ignorance followed as its attendant, till it thickened on the nations into a darkness that might be felt. In reference to all that was of the highest importance, the world was in a state of grovelling ignorance : conjecture instead of certainty, probability instead of proof, were all to which they could attain. Their poets, it is true, sung of Tartarian gulfs and Elysian fields ; but these were only considered poetic flights of the fancy, while the realities concealed beneath them were not generally believed. All the light that was possessed by the world prior to the disclosure of the gospel was that which was confined to the small nation of the Jews ; and this, compared with the light which was thereafter to be revealed, was as the first ray of the morning struggling with the retiring obscurity of the night. But when the star arose at Bethany, to dispel the darkness of the long evening, and poured its radiance on the path of life, Jesus explained what was ambiguous, he established what was doubtful ; he elucidated what was obscure ; and he shed an unearthly light on that all-important question — “ How can man be just with God ? How can man be pure with his Maker ? ”

But when we say that this gospel is adapted to man as *an ignorant being*, I would remind you that it is so, not merely as adapted to convey to him the truth he should understand, but, by a light directed to the understanding and to the heart, first to instruct the judgment, and then to renovate the soul. There is all the difference in the world between mere intellectual and spiritual light ; between that knowledge that may be obtained by the unaided efforts of the human mind, and that which is to be acquired by the teaching of the Spirit of God. The one is as different from the other as the mere picture of a country as it is painted on a map is from the country itself, where, with its hills and dales, and rivers, it stretches itself before your view. A man may have some faint conception that honey is sweet, or music harmonious ; but the individual who has not the power of tasting and hearing can have no conception of the sweetness of the one, or the melody of the other. Now, there is a species of spiritual perception with which the soul must be invested ere it is capable of seeing the excellences of eternal truth. And here the gospel comes to our aid, to dispel from



our minds the darkness of ignorance, and the delusions of error. It carries the light of eternal truth down to every compartment of the inner man: and that God who, in the beginning of time, commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines into our minds to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

It is adapted likewise to man as *a guilty being*. That he is guilty, I need not pause to prove. Our violation of the divine law, our abuse of the divine goodness, our forgetfulness of the divine authority, all combine to fasten on our minds the appalling conviction that, as by nature we are the children of wrath, so by practice we are the children of disobedience. Tremendous thought! to be exposed to the displeasure of that being, compared with which the concentrated indignation of all the beings in the universe would be only as the displeasure of a child. And yet this is the awful moral predicament in which every sinner is found. He is exposed to the lightning of that eye, he is exposed to the grasp of that omnipotent arm; and, if he die as he lives, he sinks into a state where the mercy of God is clean gone for ever, and he will be favorable no more.

Some of you are called upon this evening to pity the condition of *the heathen*. I would rather, for a moment, call upon you to pity *yourselves*. But peradventure, you ask, "How will sin be pardoned? Why will repentance avail nothing?" And what can you do by repentance? Can you recall the past, and thereby avert the future? Can you do more by repentance than acquit yourself of present obligation? Can you produce a surplus of merit that shall be employed for the reduction of your past deficiencies? Must the pardon of the philosophy which was too proud to submit to the humiliating doctrines of the cross, be based on the exploded notion of supererogation? If we are left in doubt on this subject, how sin can be pardoned, and God yet glorified, the gospel comes in to our aid. It is the precious blood of Jesus which can alone avail. He is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." And when the sinner comes and places the burden of his weakness and his woe on his precious blood and prevailing intercession, in that very act, whatever may have been his anterior crimes, he passes from death unto life — from a state of condemnation to a state of acceptance — from the dark, dreary dominion of nature, into the light and loveliness of the kingdom of God: and those perfections of the Godhead which before had lowered upon him with frowns of severity, now relax into smiles of love; and "there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."



This gospel is still further adapted to man as a *polluted being*. And we bring the broad and sweeping charge against human nature as a whole — that it is in this state of pollution. We acknowledge that there is a vast disparity as it relates to the exterior man. We know there may be the consistency of friendship, the ardor of patriotism, and the firmness of inflexible principle, even where the gospel has not found its way; and individuals who admit this truth, bring it as a charge that we have underrated the condition of mankind, and, therefore, the gospel is not necessary for them. We admit that there are in the character of man some appearances more favorable than others: we admit there are some species of excellence to be found where the gospel has not worked its way. But let us come to the point — on what are we to form our estimate of the moral character of man? Upon principle and motive. Upon that which we designate *principle* depends the moral virtue of every action, and the moral quality of every mind. Where this principle is wanting, there the character is reduced to one mass of moral depravity: where this principle exists, there is, undoubtedly, a substratum of moral excellence. And when we proceed to the examination, we shall find, that though there may be amiable dispositions, generous feelings, and firm friendships, there is a total destitution of moral principle, in the scriptural sense of the word; for that principle is, supreme love to God, evincing itself in all its appropriate forms. Bring forth, therefore, the most flattering specimen of human nature that your imagination can paint, or your experience can produce, whether in Christian or heathen lands; if the love of God has not actuated it, if the fear of God has not restrained it, if a regard to the Divine authority has not influenced it, then, notwithstanding the attractions with which the man is invested, we are compelled to reduce him to his own naked deformity, and to say, he is “a child of wrath even as others.” Weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, he is found wanting: measured by the rule of right and wrong, he comes short of what regeneration and pardon imply: and the decisions of the last day will award the unhappy outcast his destiny amongst those who had lived without repentance, and died without hope.

And is this the condition of man, as man, under all the varied forms of his existence? And has the sin-sick angel of death breathed on the vast family of man? And are they all spiritually dead? It is true. And how are they to be made alive again? The past history of the world is only a mournful record of the triumphs of sin, over every barrier that civilization or philosophy has interposed. But “the glorious gospel” comes in to our aid; and, at the very moment that it reveals to us an all-efficacious atonement through faith, by which sin

may be pardoned, it exhibits a benign agent who can enlighten what is dark, and cleanse what is impure, and elevate what is earthly, and carry the very light of heaven into the inert mass of this world's corruption. And this benign agent will communicate himself to the most unworthy supplicant that implores its aid, not only with the sovereignty of a prince, but with the generosity of a friend. So that no man is doomed to live the slave of sin contrary to his will. Wherever he is, this gospel comes to his aid. Living under a dispensation of mercy, however reduced he may be by the recklessness of his evil propensities, the gospel meets him on the very ground to which he is reduced, raises his prostrate spirit, and impresses upon it the long-lost lineaments of heaven.

It is "the glorious gospel" because it is adapted to man, as a *miserable being*. Misery and guilt are linked to each other in an unbroken chain; and no man can be the voluntary slave of sin, without, in a proportionate degree, being the victim of wretchedness. To prove this, I need not exhibit to you the many-colored woes which obtain in this lower world; I need not point out to you the pestilence impregnating the air with poison, and war drenching its sword in blood; I need not take you down to those haunts where the victims of want retire to die; I will take you where some of you may be reluctant to go; I will take you into the interior of an unpardoned sinner's heart, and there you will find misery personified before your view. He has a conscience — a conscience that appears to slumber — and he may even imagine that it is dead. But it is active all the while: with minute attention it notices every action of his life; it chronicles every thought, and waits only the favorable moment to read the black catalogue aloud, to the confusion of the sinner and the astonishment of the world. Awakening, by some unexpected incident in the history of his life, his conscience is like rousing the hungry lion in his lair: no power can resist its force, no attempts can mitigate its rage. O, the horrors of an accusing conscience! There are some evils which you may escape by going into company; there are others which you may avoid by going into solitude: but the guilty wretch passes into company, and his guilty conscience dashes the untasted cup of pleasure from his trembling lips: he goes into solitude, and, as a spirit, it passes before him, and "the hair of his flesh stands up." O man, whoever thou art, whose conscience is unappeased by the blood of sprinkling, peace of mind thou canst not enjoy:

"The dreadful syllables — death, hell, and sin —  
 Tho' whispered, plainly tell what works within;  
 That conscience there performs its faithful part,  
 And writes a doomsday sentence on your heart."

And how is this conscience to be appeased? Will philosophy avail? Will scepticism avail? Will pleasure avail? Miserable comforters are they all; a guilty conscience, like the barbed arrow in the panting sides of the wounded deer, adheres to him wherever he goes, and every attempt to eradicate the fatal shaft only lacerates the wound the more. Am I addressing such a being this evening; and do you ask, with anxious, palpitating breast, "How shall I escape the wrath to come?" O, I rejoice that I stand before you with "the glorious gospel of the blessed God." That very atonement that satisfied the claims of justice, will satisfy the claims of conscience; that very blood that expiated the guilt of sin, will allay the throbbings of an anxious mind. Here is the balm, the vital and all-healing balm, that alone can reach the emergency of your case; all else is but moral empyricism, that mocks the misery it proposes to alleviate, and deepens the wound it proposes to heal. Come to the Cross; come, and by faith apply the precious blood of sprinkling, and you will have peace within and peace above, "a tranquil conscience and a smiling God;" a peace which, built on a firm foundation, and supported by principle, cannot be shaken by aught that time can develop, or eternity conceal; a peace which, like the unruffled surface of the lake on a calm summer's evening, is not only tranquil, but reflects on its bosom the very tranquillity of the skies. O, could I but persuade you to come and allay the throbbings of your mind, by the application of this precious blood; then you would feel the truth of the declaration, that it is "the glorious gospel of the blessed God."

This gospel is adapted to man as *an immortal being*. That it be so, I need not now pause to prove; our sense of right and wrong, our insuppressible forebodings, the apparent disorders that obtain in the moral government of the universe, all combine to fasten on our minds the truth that we shall be called to a final and definite account—"Apart from which consideration," (to use the language of the finest orator of his day,) "our life is a shadow, our very existence itself is a riddle, and the mysterious events that obtain in the world around us, are as incoherent as the leaves which are scattered by the wind."

But what relief can be afforded to the inquiry—whether it be prompted by the moody spirit of unhallowed scepticism, or the trembling anxiety of unsatisfied conscience—Is this soul of mine immortal, or does it die with the body? Is this eye, before which the wide domain of nature lies spread in beautiful perspective, to be forever quenched in darkness? Is this spirit, that seems like the master spirit of this lower world, that can penetrate the profoundest with the keenness of intuition, and embody the loftiest in the colors of a vivid



imagination, to sink into gloom and annihilation, and to be, notwithstanding all its mental appliances, as though it never had been? To lull these anxious inquiries — inquiries suggested by the loftiest mind that ever descended on this orb, and to which they found no satisfactory reply — we return an unhesitating answer: “the glorious gospel of the blessed God.” There we learn that our soul is as immortal as the source from whence it came: that it may change the mode of its existence, but that its existence can never close; that it will pass through the valley of the shadow of death, but only to enter its magnificent residence, where it will find objects corresponding to its nature, and commensurate with its duration; and that which pours such a flood on the eternal destination of man, and not only points out heaven, but bestows the boon, must be “the glorious gospel of the blessed God.”

It is so, in the last place, because it is adapted to man as *an impotent being*. For vast and important as are the blessings to which I have adverted, if they were bestowed on conditions with which we could not possibly comply, the exhibition would only serve to mock our misery and enhance our despair; we should only be in the predicament of the wretch of antiquity, who was suspended over a running stream, which, when he attempted to partake of it, rushed from him, and left him more wretched than before. The blessings to which I have adverted, are not more exalted in their nature than free in their disposal; they are without money and without price: and to be without money and without price is all that is required on your part and mine, in order to receive them as the express gift of heaven. When our first parents were expelled from Paradise, there was an angel with a flaming sword placed to guard the entrance to that Paradise, and to prevent their return. But here is no angel. I recall the expression — *there is an angel*; but instead of an angel of justice with its flaming sword, it is the angel of mercy; and a voice is heard in every passing breeze, exclaiming, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” And do you wonder, brethren, that our feelings are kindled, when we state truths like these? It is an impious calumny; and, whatever might be our feelings, I should blush for myself if I could speak on such a subject, without a desire of speaking thoughts that breathe, and in words that burn, while I proclaim to guilty, rebellious, miserable, dying, immortal beings, “the glorious gospel of the blessed God.”

Thirdly, it is “the glorious Gospel of the blessed God,” because IT IS DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE ULTIMATELY THE MOST IMPORTANT BLESSINGS TO THE WORLD AT LARGE.



The reign of sin and misery is not to exist eternally on this lower world ; it is to be brought to a close. Standing on the mount of Scripture prophecy, and looking down the vale of time, we contemplate a scene such as earth never saw ; such as angels stoop down to see. The language of beauty and blessedness is employed to depict, as with the colors of heaven, this unearthly scene. The effects of the Savior's death will flow down the tide of eternity, will increase with the increasing gratitude of successive generations, and be prolonged, even after it has been hymned over the habitations of this lower world. But what is to produce this change ? Will philosophy and civilization accomplish it ? The experiment has been tried : for four thousand years philosophy had its reign ; and it is a well-attested fact, that, at the time in which philosophy shone with its greatest splendor, in which philosophers themselves were men of the highest repute, and when it was the pride of kings and emperors to patronize them, and raise them to honor — at that very time men were sunk in the depth of moral degradation ; sable night spread her canopy over this darkened world, under which the most detestable rights were perpetrated in rapid succession. A by-stander might say, “ Philosophy, it is true, instructed their minds, and civilization reformed their manners ; ” but there is nothing that can stop the course of that infernal pit, the pestilence of which continually rises before our view, and produces all monstrous things. But the gospel will come into our view, and achieve all that, in the praises of which poets sung and martyrs bled. O, what visions of glory — you who love the Savior, and desire now to encircle his brow with mediatorial glory — what visions of glory rise before our view ! In the prospect of those scenes we discover the truth : eternal truth, which has so long labored through the darkness of an eclipse, shall shine forth in its own splendor ; and men will acquire a knowledge of subjects, equally important in their nature, and imperishable in their duration. “ Holiness ” — consisting in the supreme love of God, and of conformity to his image — will be written on the very bridles of the horses, and mingle with the commerce of the nations. The heart of man — now a fountain from which all fetid streams are perpetually pouring forth — will then give birth to all that is holy in principle, and bland in disposition. The breath of heaven has originated more enlightened systems of civil government than any the world ever discovered. Then, indeed, philosophy shall refine the minds, and civilization reform the manners of mankind : but, above all, the gospel, under its plastic influence, shall mould this world into such a scene of moral beauty, that the Deity shall again look on it with complacency, and pronounce that all is very good. The love of the Savior shall warm every heart,

and dwell on every tongue — *now* rising in solitary strains of gratitude, *now* combining in hymns of praise — till it shall roll through creation, and the very thunder of God awaken the universe to new and rapturous delight: the dwellers in the valleys and on the rocks shout to each other; the distant hills and mountain-tops catch the swelling joy, till nation after nation join in the choir, and earth rolls the rapturous song around. Brethren, these are scenes which we are warranted to contemplate, through the medium of the prophecies of the gospel; and that which the prophecy announces, the truth shall achieve; and, under the influence of this “glorious gospel,” this new and better order of things shall surely arise.

I must now come to the concluding part of the subject, TO DEDUCE SUCH REMARKS AS ITS NATURE WILL SUGGEST.

First of all — for I shall be very simple and obvious in the inferences I shall draw — I remind you both of *the privileges and the obligations with which you are invested who possess this gospel*. May I not take up the language of benediction in this assembly this evening, and say, “Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.” You are guilty, and you know the medium of pardon: you are unholy, and you know the medium of sanctification: you are miserable, and you know where to flee for comfort: there is no form of evil to which you are exposed, for which there is not a commensurate remedy in the “glorious gospel;” and you are intrusted with privileges above millions. O, think of them. Your privileges and your obligations keep pace with each other; and to whom much is given, much will be required. What if this evening I were empowered to stand in the midst of the dense population of India or China — what would be the emotion of some broken-hearted wretch if he could have caught the sounds to which perhaps some of you have listened this evening with unconcern! And what if, still further, I had been commissioned to traverse the hills, and valleys, and plains, of those lands, and pronounce to its wretched inhabitants the invitations of that gospel to which you have listened: would they not rise from their abodes of wretchedness, and make the very vault of perdition to echo with the song of gratitude and praise? Remember that you possess that, this evening, for which the lost in hell would give millions of worlds. By this gospel you will be saved: by this gospel you will be condemned. “Hell,” said a pious writer, “is truth seen too late.” Be careful, I beseech you,

halfhearted, undecided, impenitent, perishing hearers of the gospel ; lest you pluck yourselves, with a suicidal hand, by your own impenitence, from the elevation you now occupy ; and sink, like Lucifer, never to rise again.

Secondly, we infer from this subject *how pitiable must be the condition of those inhabitants of the earth to whom this gospel has never been sent!* Ignorance there has no guide, misery no asylum, despair no hope ; society itself is only a scene of wretchedness, where we behold, in awful combination, all that is ferocious in aggression on the one side, and all that is ineffectual or timid in compliance on the other. But it is to man individually that the situation is most terrible. View that hoary savage. He sees about him the scenes of his youth ; his hands are stained with blood ; he sinks at once under an accumulated load of crimes and years. He would look to the grave for succor ; but alas ! all there is dark — the darkness of the shadow of death. See that poor inhabitant of Hindostan. He resorts to the most detestable orgies to allay the throbbings of a guilty conscience : he offers “ the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul.” And what can meet their case ? They are wretched *here*, and eternity to them is only a dark and dreary scene, where they are mocked with the unreal illusions of a vain imagination, or appalled by the spectres of guilt and sin. Who can meet their case ? In this fearful condition they are passing on from what is temporal to what is eternal ; and, as they vanish from our view, we seem to hear the shout of anguish, or the sullen groan of despair. What can meet their case ? Why, brethren, you possess that which will meet their case, which will enlighten their darkness, comfort them in their sorrow, and pour the very radiance of heaven over the valley of the shadow of death.

Now, I would ask, while you behold millions of your fellow-beings, allied to you by the common sympathies of nature, perishing in the situation to which I have adverted, and you possess that which will meet the urgency of their case — can you lie down on the bed of repose, and slumber unconcerned and unaffected by the piercing shrieks that arise from the agonized hearts of perishing millions ? Remember that he who refuses to extend the key of knowledge to those who are in ignorance, is, as Johnson has said, guilty of all the crimes that ignorance may produce ; in the same way that he who extinguishes a lighthouse, would be guilty of the horrors of the shipwreck. You possess the means by which this gospel may be extended. Institutions have arisen so vast as to embrace empires, and yet so minute as to receive the smallest contribution that may be poured into its treasury. We invite, then, young and old, master and servant, rich and poor, literate



and illiterate — we invite you all to link every energy of your nature with the cause, and to devote yourselves, at once, with the firmness of a principle, and the ardor of a passion, to those big and busy enterprises which are designed to tell on the moral destiny of a lost and ruined world.

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## SERMON XXXII.

THE WORTH OF THE SOUL.

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 BY REV. TIMOTHY GIBSON.  
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“What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” — MATT. xvi. 26.

WHETHER man is a merely material being, formed only to eat and drink, to live a few years on earth, and then to perish for ever in the dust, or whether he is the partaker of a higher nature, and formed for a more exalted state of being, are questions of vital importance — questions, which deeply involve our character in time, and our prospects for eternity. If, in man, be seen only a material being, whose existence is confined within the limits of threescore years and ten, and who has neither happiness to hope, nor misery to fear, beyond the grave — religion is only, as infidelity has represented it to be, a system of error, encouraging but by delusive hopes, and intimidating by superstitious fears; imposing restraints, to which you are bound by no tie to submit; and enjoining as duties, what you are under no obligation to perform. But, on the other hand, if in man is seen an immortal creature — a candidate for the skies; if, not only death, but judgment awaits him; if everlasting happiness or misery must be his doom — then, religion is the most important subject that can engage his powers; and diligently to learn its truths, and patiently to obey its commands, must be, at once, his interest and his duty.

The *worth* of the human soul, I propose, in dependence upon the help of Divine grace, to establish on the general principle of its immortality. And give me, I beseech you, your careful attention, and your earnest prayers, that God, who alone bestoweth wisdom, and out of whose mouth alone come knowledge and understanding, may afford us that assistance which we require to our profitable consideration of the subject.

Of the immortality of the soul, we have three kinds of proof: natural, moral, and Divine.



I. Natural. The *immaterial* nature of the human mind, furnishes so strong a proof of its immortality, as to have forced one of the most subtle advocates of infidelity to acknowledge, that if the soul be, indeed, distinct from matter, the inference can scarcely be avoided, that it is immortal! Let us then shortly examine whether we are, or are not, elevated in the scale of being, above the earth we tread upon, and the gross materials of which these earthly bodies are made — whether we are, or are not, by the original constitution of our nature, the subjects of immortality.

It is a principle, which must necessarily be admitted as the groundwork of all reasoning — that, from nothing, nothing can arise; and that for every effect there must exist a sufficient cause. It is the province of reason and of philosophy to trace out effects; to explore the source from whence they proceed, and to ascertain whether the cause which is assigned them be equal to their production. Were an idolater to inform you, that his god of wood or stone had often heard his prayer, alleviated his sufferings, and supplied his wants, you would reject his testimony, and pity his weakness; because your own understanding would convince you, that a mere block of wood, or stone, however elegantly formed, or beautifully ornamented, yet, being inanimate, could not hear his supplications, or afford him relief.

A cause like this, you would perceive, must necessarily be unequal to the production of such effects: the testimony, therefore, however confidently given, you would at once reject.

In man, we find perception, consciousness, thought, and reason; and the question presents itself to the inquiring mind — “Do these properties result from matter; or, have they a distinct, an independent, an immaterial cause?” The existence of the properties themselves, is unquestionable; there must therefore exist some substance, or being, from which, as their *cause*, these effects proceed; and, as we have before remarked, it is the province of reason and philosophy to search out this cause, and to ascertain, as nearly as possible, its nature.

Give to the man of science any portion of matter, and let him reduce it to its first principles; does he find any one of them the subject of thought or reason? Impossible. Let him examine the nature of the electric fluid, to the instrumentality of which, as some philosophers seem to have taught, the visible creation owes all its variety of texture and form. Does reason reside here? No. Let him investigate the nervous system in the human body, with which sensation is unquestionably connected. Do the nerves possess thinking or reasoning powers? Assuredly not. The inevitable conclusion, therefore, is, that these powers are neither essential properties of matter, nor in-

herent in any material elements, within the compass of our research. And it would be absurd to suppose, that the effect can rise above its cause, since that would be to state, that a thing might be produced by a cause unequal to its production; or, that the mind of man has no adequate cause of existence.

If, however these absurdities are too evident to be admitted; if man possess thinking and reasoning powers; if these powers are neither essential properties of matter, nor inherent in any material element within our knowledge; and if no union of elements can give a power essentially different from those powers, which those elements separately possess — then, the human mind is produced by no modification of matter; but must, in its nature, be immaterial and spiritual.

The *intellectual* powers of man furnish a second proof, that his soul is immaterial. We have already stated, that no effect can rise higher than its cause; in illustration of which remark, it may be added, that the motion given to an inanimate body, can only be in exact proportion to the force employed. And if no excellency can be communicated which is not possessed, it will assuredly follow, that a material mind must be incapable of performing a spiritual act, or of perceiving an immaterial object. But the human mind does perform acts purely spiritual; and does perceive objects purely immaterial; therefore it manifestly follows, that, in its nature, it must be immaterial also.

To think, to understand, to reason, are actions, which it is impossible for mere matter to perform. To see the beauty of goodness, and to feel the force of moral obligation, are also the peculiar prerogatives of man. Truth and falsehood, justice and oppression, benevolence and cruelty, appear to him in widely different colors, and excite in his mind essentially different feelings. He rises higher; he forms conceptions of angels and spirits — of the perfections, and character, and government of God; he prays and praises, reverences and adores; rejoices in Jehovah's favor, and fears Jehovah's wrath. Here, also, we discover powers which mere matter cannot possess; and, therefore, powers, which matter can never communicate.

But an objection against these conclusions is sometimes raised, from the painful effects produced on the mind by the weaknesses and diseases of the body. "Where," says the materialist, "shall we find proofs of the mind's independence of the bodily structure? Of that mind, which, like its clay tabernacle, is infantile in the child, debilitated in disease, enfeebled in old age, and annihilated by death?" This objection however, great as it appears at first sight, is not insurmountable. Though we allow that the mind, during its continuance in the present world, is united to the body, and is so far confined to it, that

its senses are the only medium through which impressions are communicated from surrounding objects, and its organs the only instruments by which the mind here carries on its visible operations, yet this by no means proves it to be material; and the objection alluded to vanishes immediately, when we reflect, that the ideas which the mind forms of objects, must, necessarily, be correct or incorrect, in proportion to the perfection or imperfection of the senses; and that its operations must be affected, in some degree, according to the state of the brain. But the senses and the brain are not therefore the mind; nor do they on this account produce it.

This immateriality of the mind deprives the materialist of all positive evidence for its perishableness or its death! it furnishes, if not absolute proof, at least, a strong probability of its immortality; and also lays a firm foundation, on which other proofs of this important fact may rest. Immateriality seems to imply a natural power of perpetual duration, as a consequence of exemption from all causes of decay. Dissolution is only the separation of the constituent parts of a compound body; and it is effected either by some inward tendency in the nature of that body, or by some outward violence employed; but an immaterial substance, being formed of no union of material elements, cannot be the subject of inward decays, but must preserve the identity of its nature for ever. No means, short of an annihilating act by him who gave it being, can terminate its existence; and as in this exemption from inward corruption and from outward violence, we have an apparent assurance that such an act will not be performed, the conclusion seems just—that the human soul is not the natural subject of dissolution, but was designed by its Creator to enjoy an endless life.

## II. Of this immortality we have proofs of a moral nature.

1. The first of these is derived from the *wisdom* and *goodness* of God. It is the province of wisdom, to adapt the means used to the ends proposed; and of goodness, to proportion happiness to the powers of the object for whom that happiness is designed. The Creator of the world, being infinitely wise, the means employed by him must, with the utmost exactness, be fitted to the ends proposed; and the powers of the beings he has formed, must be precisely adapted to the proper exercise of those powers, and to the final destiny of the beings themselves; and, as he is infinitely good, provision must be made by him for the supply of every desire he has implanted. Whether we look at beasts or birds, fishes or insects, all are furnished with organs exactly adapted to the functions they are intended to perform, and to the



sphere in which these creatures are designed to move. Nor is there either defect or superfluity observable throughout the whole.

Man, we have said, possesses thinking and reasoning powers, by which he understands truth and obtains knowledge ; and even in the present state, much is placed within the limits of these powers. Looking upon the world in which he is placed, he contemplates the wonderful charm of being carried on, by almost imperceptible links, through the vegetable to the brute, and through the brute to the rational creation : he searches out the order of parts apparently discordant and detached ; refers to its proper class, each moving creature that hath life, and each plant that adorns the garden or the field ; he investigates the nature of things, and renders subservient to his own interests, his health or his comfort, water and air, light and heat. He calls the microscope to his aid, and discovers in every leaf, in every drop of water, and in every grain of sand, beings, diminutive indeed, but which, by the perfection of their life and powers, furnish additional proof of the wisdom and beneficence of God. Rising above the earth, he tells the number of the stars, explains the laws of the planetary worlds, and calculates, with amazing exactness, the periods of their varied revolutions. Passing from nature to nature's God, he beholds in the magnitude and grandeur of the objects that surround him, the majesty and power of God ; in their variety, fitness and order, his infinite wisdom ; and in the provision made for the supply of the returning wants of every living thing, his providential care and goodness : and passing from nature to revelation, he finds fuller manifestations of the Divine will. Extensive, however, as man's present knowledge may be, yet compared with what remains to be known, it is as nothing. There are yet innumerable regions which man has never traversed, and mines of inexhaustible richness which he has never penetrated. In the nature and reason of things, in the works and ways of God, in the dispensations of Providence and the plan of redemption, he sees much that is veiled in partial or entire obscurity, and which yet escapes his grasp. He is here but in the dawn of being ; he sees only in part ; not indeed because his powers are unequal to the task of comprehending any more, but because he "sees through a glass darkly," because, though the intellectual eye is strong in many cases, the communicating medium is dim or defective.

And has Infinite Wisdom given these capacities, yet at the same time resolved that they shall never arrive at perfection ? Has Infinite Wisdom furnished the immaterial vessel with powers to explore the vast ocean of eternity, yet at the same time, decreed that its voyage shall be confined to the narrow straits of this short and uncertain life ?



Impossible! Divine Wisdom must adapt the means to the end; and adjust the powers of beings to the purposes for which those powers were suited, and to the sphere in which those beings were designed to move.

2. The second proof, of this class, is derived from the *moral* powers of the mind. That such powers are possessed, we have already seen; but, alas! how low is the degree of perfection to which they here attain! Passing by the thousands, who never emerge from the darkness and pollution of sensuality, nor burst the bonds of appetite; who never seek to attain the perfection of their nature, till the sun of life is on the decline, or about to set; and turning our attention to the wisest and best of men to be found in the present state; after all their conflicts with inward depravity, with an alluring world, and a tempting enemy, and after all the conquests which, aided by Divine grace, they have achieved, how low, in reality, are their acquirements! How defective their piety towards their God! How weak their sense of obligation to their Creator and Preserver! How little their reverence for the authority, their gratitude for the mercies, their delight in the favor, and their obedience to the will of their heavenly Father! In a word, how imperfect their conformity to the law and perfections of their God! A voice, in every Christian's breast, echoes the language of an apostle, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; I count not myself to have apprehended."

Impelled by the desires which the Spirit of holiness has implanted in his breast, the believer "forgets the things that are behind, and reaches forward to those things which are before." He longs for a state more congenial to the best wishes of his heart; a state, in which, irregular appetites shall no more corrupt the mind; in which, temptations shall no more solicit to sin. "I shall be satisfied," he cries, when I awake up in thy likeness." And has the God of infinite goodness and wisdom fitted his intelligent creature for such advancement in holiness, such high degrees of excellence, and will he allow no sufficient opportunities for the attainment of them? Yes! The Wisdom, that gave those powers, designed their perfection: they shall, therefore, be transplanted to a happier soil, and placed under more genial skies, where they shall bloom as the rose of Sharon; shall flourish in perpetual fragrance and beauty.

3. The last of this sort of proofs of the immortality of the soul, I shall mention, is founded on the acknowledgment which has been made, by men of all ages and nations, of their decided conviction of the truth of this all-important doctrine.

Whether we turn our attention to ancient or modern times, to bar-

barous or to civilized countries, those have always been found, who have received the doctrine of the soul's immortality. Two striking instances, from heathen writers of antiquity, shall be given.

Zenophon, the Grecian historian, represents Cyrus, as thus addressing his sons, before his death: — “Do not imagine, that when I leave you I shall cease to exist. For even when I was yet with you, my spirit you could not discern; but that it animated this body, you were fully persuaded by the actions which I performed. Be assured, it will continue the same, though you see it not. I can never believe that man lives only while he is in the body, and dies when that is dissolved; or, that the soul loses all intelligence on being separated from an unintelligent mass of earth; but, rather, that on being liberated from all mixture with the body, pure and entire, it enters upon its true, intellectual existence!”

The great Roman orator represents Cato thus speaking to two friends: — “As long as we are shut up in this dungeon of sense, we have to toil through the painful and necessary drudgery of life, and to accomplish the laborious task of a hireling. The celestial spirit is, as it were, depressed, and plunged into the mire of this world — a state repugnant to its true nature and eternal duration. Oh! glorious day! when I shall be admitted into the assembly of the wise and good: when I shall make an eternal escape from this sink of corruption, this den of folly!”

If such were the expectations of unenlightened heathens, how much more clearly are life and immortality brought to light by the gospel!

III. This is the third source, from whence we would draw some proofs of the soul's immortality.

The oracles of God expressly teach the immaterial nature, the independent existence, and the immortal life of the soul.

The sacred historian, in the account given of the creation of man, has strongly marked the communication of a principle or nature distinct from matter, and different from the gifts bestowed on the various orders of beings which had been previously formed. In the creation of *them* Jehovah is represented as but speaking, and causing it to be done. “Let the waters, or the earth, bring forth the moving creature that hath life,” is the command given, and creatures possessing animal life, with all its instincts and powers, present themselves.

But is *man* to be formed? — the three persons of the Deity are called into solemn deliberation. “Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness,” is the extraordinary counsel taken, and the resolution adopted. Is man to be brought into existence? Strongly to

mark the communication of a distinct and superior nature, God himself "breathes into his nostrils the breath of life, and he becomes a living soul." A nature is communicated, superior to that possessed by any other creature of earthly origin, and more nearly resembling the Divine: a spirit is given, possessing thinking and reflecting powers.

In the language of holy confidence adopted by the Psalmist — "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory," we see an expectation entertained of an admission to the realms of everlasting light, at the close of the present life. The wise man concludes his striking description of the infirmities of age and the decays of life, with that solemn declaration — "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Two distinct parts of man are here mentioned; and widely different statements are made respecting them. The body is called "dust," and it is affirmed, it "shall return to the earth as it was;" formed of material elements, to those elements it shall again return. But the mind is styled "the spirit;" and in direct reference to the account given by Moses of the creation of man it is said, it "shall return unto God who gave it." It shall pass, at the death of the body, into another state of existence, and shall be appointed by its Maker and Judge, to dwell in paradise with "the spirits of just men made perfect," or (since the righteous alone can dwell in that kingdom of holiness,) to suffer the miseries of the lost forever.

The same doctrine was taught by the incarnate Son of God. When arming the minds of his disciples and apostles against the assaults, which he knew that they would have to sustain from the power and malice of the enemies of his religion, he said — "Fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him, who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Here, also, two separate parts of man are clearly pointed out; and very different declarations are made respecting them. Of the body, the Savior states — "men may kill it." Material in its nature, it is liable to decay; and by disease, or violence may be deprived of life. And were the soul nothing more than animated matter, and dependent for its existence on the body, the same stroke that kills the body, would necessarily terminate also the existence of the soul; and, at death, the whole man must die. This, however, the Savior affirms not to be the case: "men cannot kill the soul." The soul must, therefore, be immaterial in its nature, and must not depend, for existence, on any mere bodily powers.

"We know," says the apostle, "that if the earthly house of this tab-



ernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God; a house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord; we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord."

Such are some of the arguments, in proof of the all-important doctrine of the immortality of the soul of man. It only remains, that we make a short application of the subject to ourselves. And in doing this, I beseech every one of you to put to himself, solemnly and earnestly, the question contained in the text—"What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

What can redeem the immortal spirit?—a spirit exposed, in consequence of its guilt, to banishment from the presence of God, from the glories of his kingdom, from the joys of his right hand; and doomed to eternal wretchedness and despair? Were the whole material creation offered as the purchase of its redemption, how inadequate would be the ransom, how disproportionate the price!

Each of you, my brethren, possesses a soul thus invaluable; a soul, which must live in happiness or misery, in heaven or hell, for ever. This fact, the careless and thoughtless amongst you may disregard or disbelieve. Be it known to you, however, that if a God of omnipotence, of justice, and of grace, has endued you with immortal souls, your neglect or disbelief will neither alter their nature, nor extinguish their being. Enlightened and warmed by the mid-day sun, you may shut your eyes; and then attempt to deny, or profess to doubt, his existence; but such denials, or pretended doubts, destroy him not—they shroud not the heavens in darkness, they consign not the earth to eternal dreariness.

The poor infidel, who, in the hour of death, stretched out his impious arm, and exclaimed—"I will not die!" became, notwithstanding, the prey of the last enemy, and found, when too late, that neither his disbelief nor his power, could withstand the purpose of the Almighty. You, too, may neglect or disbelieve, but you cannot alter your immortality. You may convert the glory of your nature into an object of alarm; and turn Heaven's greatest blessing, into your heaviest curse. You may ruin, but you cannot annihilate, the soul. Immortality—a resurrection—a judgment day, are appointed to you by that God whose eye you cannot escape, whose purpose you cannot frustrate, and whose holiness requires that (as his word has threatened) "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

The question returns, with double force, "What will you give in



exchange for your soul?" Pensioners on the Divine bounty, you have nothing to offer; and had you ten thousand worlds, they would not furnish a sufficient price. It cost more to redeem the soul.

But, blessed be the eternal name, no price is asked for you. That God, against whom you have so often, and so ungratefully rebelled; whose holiness you have offended, whose majesty you have insulted, whose goodness you have abused, and whose displeasure you have deserved; "wonder, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth!" that God has said concerning you — "Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." Yes, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." That Son, of whom it is revealed, that "he was in the beginning with God, and was God," came into the world, proclaiming — "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and to give his life a ransom for many." The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins." Well did the apostle say — "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

Behold, then, my brethren, with the eye of faith, your merciful and Almighty Savior! See him dying for human guilt; and rising again for the justification of human hope. "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." Such is the gracious, yet simple declaration of Jesus, the Savior of sinners. To you is this word of salvation sent. Receive it with that self-appropriation, earnestness, and gratitude, which so well become guilty and perishing sinners; and ever remember, that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;" — that "faith overcometh the world, purifieth the heart, and worketh by love."











SEP 11 1930

